

**MULTIPLYING CHURCHES
AMONG GERMAN IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES
IN URBAN SOUTH BRAZIL**

**A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF
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PREFACE

My wife and I have had the privilege of serving together as missionaries in northeast Brazil for nearly thirty years, with a focus upon leadership training and church planting. Our ministry was concentrated mainly in the city of Fortaleza, where we were involved in the planting of eight local churches over a twenty-five year time period. At the same time we also established a theological education by extension program, training as many as four hundred lay leaders in some sixty Bible churches scattered throughout the state of Ceará. As the churches developed, we saw the need to begin a seminary to better equip pastors and missionaries for our growing church movement. By the year 2005, the Lord had blessed the ministry in Fortaleza to the point that we had twenty growing, reproducing churches led by Brazilian pastors. A multiplying church movement had been born which would continue on its own without our missionary presence.

In 2005, our mission agency gave us a new assignment to train leaders and plant churches in south Brazil, beginning in the Porto Alegre metropolitan area. After making two survey trips there, we were quickly impressed with the contrasts between Porto Alegre and Fortaleza. In fact, about the only things we could find in common between these two third-world cities was their similar size and urban complexity. Beyond those common strands, these two cities were for the most part a study in

contrasts. While Porto Alegre is located in south Brazil, one of the most progressive regions of the country, Fortaleza is located in northeast Brazil, one of its most backward regions. While Porto Alegre's social fabric is comprised of a strong middle class, the overwhelming majority of Fortaleza's population struggles to rise above the line of poverty. While Porto Alegre's ethnic roots are predominantly European with value placed upon personal and corporate organization and timeliness, Fortaleza's roots are multi-ethnic, resulting in a much more relaxed lifestyle and work ethic. While Porto Alegre's population is more reserved and hesitant to embrace the gospel, Fortaleza's population is more open and willing to accept the gospel message.

Noting the great contrast between these two cities, we quickly realized that we could not take the church planting and leadership training model used in Fortaleza and simply duplicate it in Porto Alegre with the same results and effectiveness. In fact, it became clear to us that significant changes would need to be made in evangelistic strategy, in the form of church government, in the organization and timeliness of church functions, and in the methodology of church procedure, to name a few. We would need to immerse ourselves in south Brazil's culture and history so as to know how best to train leaders and plant churches within their social context. This thesis-project was born out of that need. In the first chapter, the project background and scope set the stage for

planting churches among the predominantly German immigrant communities in urban south Brazil.

In the second chapter, the Biblical and theological framework for the project is laid by studying pertinent literature as well as Biblical insights on evangelism and discipleship, leadership training, church planting and missions that will assist in multiplying churches among urban populations of predominantly German descent in south Brazil.

Launching a multiplying church movement necessitates an initial emphasis upon evangelism and discipleship, upon building bridges and connecting with the people, upon being an integral part of community life. These issues will be treated, as well as the importance of leadership training in the areas of character building, ministry training, and Biblical and theological grounding. The nature of leadership training in both personal and group settings will be explored, with the goal of seeing believers mature as individuals, spouses, and servants of God, exposing them to the various facets of church planting ministry and helping them develop a solid Biblical and theological foundation for life and ministry. Effective ministry among those of predominantly German descent will also necessitate the equipping of church planters. Steps to prepare them for planting new churches will be explored. Missions will also be emphasized as a central focus in their Biblical and theological preparation. Pertinent issues surrounding global missions will be studied, focusing especially upon the need for missions in their

heartlands. In summary, the multiplying of churches among urban populations of predominantly German descent in south Brazil must be grounded upon a solid Biblical and theological framework.

In the third chapter, the cultural framework is laid by looking at the German immigrant way of life, values and traditions in south Brazil, as well as the religious movements that impacted its communities. The planting of churches in urban south Brazilian society must be built upon the cultural and social framework of their heritage, understanding who they are, what led them to settle in Brazil, the cultural patterns and practices they have continued from their European heritage, as well as their unique contributions to south Brazilian society, so as to determine how best to build bridges into their communities, connect with them in their cultural setting, develop lasting friendships with them, and share the gospel of Christ in a relevant manner. A better understanding of their history, especially in light of the religious movements that impacted their communities, will enable us to know how to more effectively plant churches in their communities. In summary, the planting of churches among urban populations in south Brazil of predominantly German descent must be grounded upon a solid cultural and historical framework.

The fourth chapter describes the planting of the church in the city of Campo Bom. A number of research tools will be used and blended together in this chapter. First of all, careful research will be undertaken

to discover the demographics that make up the city of Campo Bom, as well as its unique contribution as a satellite city of the greater Porto Alegre metropolitan area. Second, careful research, observation and analysis of the people of Campo Bom will be undertaken to better understand their way of life as an urban community of predominantly German descent. This demographic and ethnographic research will be coupled with participant observation of the Campo Bom community where the church will be planted with the goal of interacting with their cultural and religious values. Survey research and statistical analysis will also be conducted in the targeted community by means of questionnaires and interviews, with a view to understanding their beliefs and doubts, so as to develop an effective strategy for planting churches to reach them with the gospel of Christ. In summary, the thesis project design will blend a number of research tools with the goal of planting a church in the city-suburb of Campo Bom.

The fifth and final chapter will assess the Campo Bom church plant to evaluate its strengths and weaknesses. Emphasis will be given to fine tuning a strategy for beginning a multiplying church movement from the greater Porto Alegre metroplex to other urban centers of predominantly German descent in south Brazil, culminating in a missionary vision for impacting Europe for Christ. To this end, key cultural and theological truths will be explored, along with lessons learned. In summary, the issue addressed by this thesis-project is the multiplication of churches

among urban populations of predominantly German descent in south Brazil.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis-project is to lay a theological, cultural and historical framework for multiplying churches among German immigrant communities in urban south Brazil. The thesis begins by examining the missionary challenge and vision that led to the initial church plant project in Campo Bom, a satellite city-suburb of Porto Alegre with a pronounced German culture and influence. A Biblical and theological framework for multiplying churches is then explored by developing key missiological and ecclesiological principles on evangelism, discipleship, leadership training, church planting and missions. A cultural and historical framework is also laid by studying the German immigrant way of life, values and religious traditions in south Brazil. The heart of the project profiles the city of Campo Bom as well as the steps taken in planting the church there, concluding with an assessment of the Campo Bom church plant in light of the goal of beginning a multiplying church movement among German immigrant urban communities in south Brazil

CHAPTER 1

SETTING THE STAGE

Introduction

These are exciting days in missions. We are witnessing one of the most significant transitions in the history of Christian missions. Few of us, even those involved in missions, have perceived the magnitude of what God is effecting in our world today. Christianity during the past century has slowly been shifting its center of gravity southward from North America and Europe to Latin America, Africa and Asia. The age of Western Christianity is passing. The day of Southern Christianity is dawning.

Brazil is part of the new heartlands of Christianity. As the giant of Latin American countries, it is the fifth largest and most populous country in the world. It was first discovered by Pedro Alves Cabral in 1500, being a colony of Portugal until its independence in 1822. It became a republic in 1889, currently comprised of twenty-six states and one federal district.¹

Brazil is larger than continental United States, being divided into five major geographic regions. The north region accounts for nearly half of

¹ Official government data: *Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatísticas*
<http://www.ibge.gov.br> (2000).

the country's land mass, including the vast Amazon rainforest with its many indigenous tribes. It is mostly undeveloped. The northeast region accounts for about thirty percent of the country's population and is quite culturally diverse. It is also the poorest region of the country. Fortaleza, the city where we ministered as missionaries for twenty-five years, is one of the region's largest cities. The central-west region contains one of the world's largest marshlands, the Pantanal, as well as the largest savanna in the world. It is known for its agricultural production. Brasilia, the nation's capital, is located in this region. The southeast region is the business and industrial hub of the country. It is also the most densely populated region, being home to the city of Sao Paulo, one of the world's largest megapolises. The south region has the highest per capita income, as well as highest standard of living in the country. It is also the coldest region, with occasional frost and snow in the mountains. It was settled by European immigrants, largely of Portuguese, Italian, and German descent, being clearly influenced by these cultures. Porto Alegre, where we presently minister, is one of the region's largest and most influential cities.

Brazil is a land of promise. It is the world's eighth largest economy, known for its manufacturing, mining, agriculture, technology and services, as well as its large labor pool. It is a significant oil producer and the world's largest producer of ethanol. It has been expanding its presence in the global financial and commodities markets and is

regarded along with Russia, India and China as one of the four emerging world economies.²

Brazil is a multicultural and multiethnic society. Native Indians, Africans, Portuguese, Dutch, Lebanese, Japanese, Chinese, Italians, Slavics, and Germans, to name a few, have all found a home in this great land. The largest ethnic group in Brazil is the Portuguese, followed by the Italian, African, Amerindian, Spanish, German and Japanese. South Brazil, in particular, has been greatly influenced by European culture as a result of the Portuguese, German and Italian immigrants who settled in the region.

Brazil is a Christian nation, part of a Christian continent. However, as Bonino, the well-known Argentinian theologian, has pointed out, what took place in Latin America was a “colossal transplantation” of the basic structures, disciplines and ministries of the Roman Catholic Church, resulting in a “tremendous form without substance.”³ This has led missiologists like Galilea to affirm the need for a “first evangelization” among “unevangelized people.”⁴ As a result, Brazil is experiencing its own religious reformation. Though still the country with the largest

² Official government data: *Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatísticas* <http://www.ibge.gov.br> (2000).

³ Samuel Escobar, “Latin America,” in *Toward the Twenty-First Century in Christian Mission*, ed. James Phillips and Robert Coote, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1993), 127.

⁴ Samuel Escobar, “Latin America,” in *Toward the Twenty-First Century in Christian Mission*, ed. James Phillips and Robert Coote, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1993), 130.

Roman Catholic population in the world, Protestantism has grown significantly since 1970, due largely to the Pentecostal and neo-Pentecostal movements that have swept the country. Today, practicing evangelicals outnumber practicing Catholics,⁵ though nearly seventy-five percent of the population still claims to be Roman Catholic, while over fifteen percent claims to be Protestant. Other religions include Spiritism, practiced by nearly thirty percent of Roman Catholics,⁶ and to a much lesser degree, Buddhism, Judaism and Islam. The country also has significant numbers of agnostics, atheists, and non-religious.

During the past ten years, the Brazil Gospel Fellowship Mission, the missionary agency with whom I work, has conducted surveys throughout Brazil to define the regions with the greatest need for church planting. The results of these surveys have indicated south Brazil as a needy region. Having worked for nearly thirty years in church planting and leadership training in northeast Brazil, my wife and I have accepted the challenge of heading up a team to begin a multiplying church movement and leadership training ministry in urban communities of predominantly German descent in south Brazil. Serving in a country where the gospel of Christ has a firm foothold, our primary ministry role is one of training Brazilian leaders to reach their own people for Christ, as well as

⁵ Emilio Nunez and William Taylor, *Crisis in Latin America*, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1989), 160.

⁶ Emilio Nunez and William Taylor, *Crisis in Latin America*, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1989), 132.

challenging them to take the gospel to other needy regions of the world. In a nutshell, our motto could be defined as “sent to send.” Since most of the leaders we will be training in south Brazil are of European descent, our church planting efforts will have a European flavor. As we pour our lives into south Brazilian pastors and missionaries, our desire is to see a multiplying church movement established that will not only impact south Brazil for Christ, but also develop a missionary vision for impacting Europe.

Understanding the Missionary Challenge

In the surveys conducted during the past ten years in south Brazil, a number of factors have surfaced emphasizing the need for planting churches in urban communities of predominantly German descent. One factor has been the rise of spiritism, which has blended imperceptibly with Catholicism to the point of forming a syncretistic union that many believe to be the fastest growing religious movement in Latin America today.⁷ In fact, Reed affirms Brazil to be the largest spiritist country in the world.⁸ Spiritism’s more sophisticated form is known as Kardecism, named after its founder, Allan Kardec, the Frenchman who originated the

⁷ William Read, Victor Monterroso and Harmon Johnson, *Latin American Church Growth*, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1969), 249.

⁸ William Read, *New Patterns of Church Growth in Brazil*, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1965), 209.

term spiritism in the mid-nineteenth century. It's more primitive expression is known as Umbanda and Candomble, having its roots in African religions brought over by colonial slaves. While Kardec's "high" spiritism has so meshed with Catholicism that it is fast becoming the preference of the elite of Brazilian society, Africa's Candomble and Umbanda grass roots spiritism has so meshed with Catholicism that it is fast becoming the syncretistic preference of the masses. South Brazil has become one of the major centers of spiritism in the country.

Another factor pinpointing the need for planting churches in south Brazil has been the rise of a plethora of Pentecostal and charismatic movements. These movements have impacted urban communities of predominantly German descent in south Brazil in the final decades of the twentieth century. They have crossed denominational lines and today comprise a significant block of the Protestant population of south Brazil. Because of their grassroots nature, they are highly volatile movements and have given birth to innumerable spin-offs that tend to be cultic in orientation.

Both the rise of spiritism and Pentecostalism in south Brazil can be linked to the prevailing culture Christianity rooted there. The Roman Catholic and Lutheran churches proved zealous in Christianizing their Italian and German immigrant populations and, in some cases, in expanding their brand of Christianity to the native populations of south Brazil as well. Over time this traditional, culture Christianity left

profound marks on the Christendom established there, leading to a numbing nominalism or Christianity in name only where many claimed to have tried Christianity and found it wanting. South Brazilian young people, especially those in university towns and cities, have begun to question their religious heritage and are looking for answers elsewhere, opening the floodgates to relativism and pluralism. One result has been the spawning of a dizzying array of religious movements that are in perpetual motion, yet getting nowhere. Those who follow these movements are enmeshed in a living contradiction of growing religious organizations on the one hand and growing injustice, corruption and immorality on the other. Another result has been the replacing of religious beliefs for an evolutionary mindset that considers life to be limited to the here and now. Youth from the urban population of predominantly German descent are in many cases shedding their religious traditions and replacing them with a relativism that asserts that what really matters is what is true for each person in their particular situation. In sum, the sad legacy of south Brazil's culture Christianity among the urban population of predominantly German descent is a society that is almost imperceptibly becoming post-Christian, if not non-Christian. Christendom's death knell has been sounded.

We stand at a significant missiological and ecclesiological crossroads today as we plant churches in south Brazil and throughout Latin America. We must not fall prey to the old Christendom with a new

evangelical face, nor must we exchange the grassroots vibrancy of our Christian faith for the powerful pull of the Christendom of the elite. Those who do so will condemn themselves and their followers to the darkness of a failed Christendom.

Yet another factor pointing to the need for planting churches in south Brazil has been the rise of a materialistic society. Materialism has made significant inroads among the urban population of predominantly German descent in south Brazil and in its wake has spawned a growing secularist mindset. Many are rapidly buying into the consumerism, materialism and hedonism of Western culture. Society now offers more brands of cars, foods, clothing, and commodities in general than ever before, causing Brazilians, like others, to become so materialistic that convictions are quickly taking a back seat to pleasure. Choice has increased while conviction has decreased. Consumerism is imperceptibly deforming culture and undermining society, dictating its wants and promising liberty and happiness while delivering neither. Progress is increasing measurably, but so are abortion, crime, violence, injustice and poverty. While education is reducing ignorance, relativism is destroying meaning. While wealth is being created at a frantic pace, more are slipping into poverty. The gap between the rich and poor in Brazil is ever widening. While pluralism and its array of religious options are growing, so are immorality, corruption and injustice, both from within and from without. In sum, modernity has created a self-sufficient, autonomous

mindset that as time progresses I believe will become confining, suffocating and death-producing.

How do we plant churches against the backdrop of the pluralism, relativism, materialism and secularism of our urban south Brazilian society? How do we reverse the pluralist trend of relativizing the absolutes of the Word of God and offering in its place a dazzling array of religious options? How do we counter the rise of agnosticism and atheism? How do we deal with the encroaching effects of materialism and secularism? Only by the power of the gospel of the triune God of the Bible can the Christian faith overcome cultural containment and contamination. Only by the power of God's Word and Spirit lived out in the lives of His people can we overcome modernity's pluralistic challenge. We must commit ourselves to the centrality of the triune God and His Word. We must be theologically sound and missiologically informed as we come to grips with the worldviews, beliefs and practices that dominate our world today. We must build bridges rather than walls as we live out our faith to those around us and respond to our changing environment, offering the hope that can only be found in Christ. Only then will modernity's pluralistic challenge be engaged with purpose and hope.

The results of the surveys conducted among the urban communities of predominantly German descent in south Brazil point to a great need for planting churches and training leaders to establish a multiplying

church movement there that will reach beyond its borders and impact Europe and other continents for Christ.

Developing a Missionary Vision

During the past few years, the Brazil Gospel Fellowship Mission, with whom I work, has been developing a missionary vision for impacting key regions of Brazil for Christ. This mission was founded in 1936 with this stated purpose: “to aid in the evangelization of Brazil, South America.”⁹ The mission began evangelizing and planting churches in the state of Ceara in northeast Brazil. By 1965 the capital city of Fortaleza was quickly becoming the hub for the Brazil Gospel Fellowship Mission’s (BGFM) missionary families. My own parents, Sam and Jeannie Stucky, eventually moved from the rural town of Quixeramobim, where I was born and spent my early childhood, to the city of Fortaleza to plant churches in more receptive soil. By the time my wife, Rachel, and I arrived in Fortaleza in 1980, fresh from college and seminary, we became part of the second generation of missionaries that worked with our mission’s pioneer missionaries in planting churches and training leaders. Training centers were established, ranging from the initial Berean School to the Antioch Bible Institute, Priscila School, and Theological Education by Extension schools, culminating in the establishing of the Maranatha

⁹ *Constitution of the Brazil Gospel Fellowship Mission*, 1.

Bible Seminary as a joint venture with a sister mission in 1983. Camps, radio ministries and Christian schools began expanding. In the next twenty-five years, the ministry in Fortaleza grew from five to twenty churches. The churches, each with their trained Brazilian pastors, began reproducing daughter churches. As they multiplied and caught the missionary vision, they responded by sending believers from their churches to serve the Lord in other parts of Brazil and the world. These training institutions, camps, schools and radio ministry were transitioned to competent Brazilian leadership. More recently, a Brazilian mission agency was established to send missionaries initially to Africa, Europe and Latin America to proclaim the gospel of Christ and plant churches. A multiplying church movement was born in Fortaleza which will continue on its own without our missionary presence.

As we transitioned our church plants and seminary in Fortaleza to competent Brazilian leadership, a number of missionaries, my wife, Rachel, and I included, sensed that it was time to move on and assist in birthing new multiplying church movements in other needy regions of Brazil. The board of the Brazil Gospel Fellowship Mission, believing it was time to refocus our vision as a mission organization, called for a series of planning meetings to reevaluate and fine tune our missionary vision for Brazil. The result was the following 2020 Vision statement adopted by both the home and field councils of the Brazil Gospel Fellowship Mission in 2010:

Our purpose is to reach Brazil for Christ. To accomplish this vision, we will concentrate on expanding our multiplying church movement in strategic fields throughout Brazil with the intent of forming additional teams to impact other regions worldwide. We are committed to using multi-national ministry teams for indigenous church planting, leadership training and support ministries in all our fields. In each field we will train Brazilian leaders to plant churches and develop support ministries for the churches being planted with the ultimate goal of establishing indigenous works that will develop leaders from within the local church, generate finances from within the local church, plant new churches by means of the local church, train and send missionaries from the local church, and equip leaders to produce sound Biblical materials for the local church...We desire to instill this vision in all of our church plants and support ministries. As we see responsible reproducing churches and support ministries established in our existing fields, with competent national leadership generating adequate finances to continue and expand the work in their region, we desire to utilize personnel, financial support and ministry resources from our existing fields to expand ministry into these and other regions being targeted as they are further researched and surveyed. Our desire is to be directed by God alone with a vision blessed by God alone for the glory of God alone.¹⁰

Thus, in 2005, my wife and I accepted the challenge of heading up a team to begin a multiplying church movement and leadership training ministry in urban population centers of predominantly German descent in south Brazil. Brazil's two southernmost states, Santa Catarina and Rio Grande do Sul, were chosen as our target region, and the city of Porto Alegre, the capital of Rio Grande do Sul, along with its satellite cities, was selected as the target focus.

South Brazil is the smallest of the five geographic regions of the country, including the states of Parana, Santa Catarina, and Rio Grande

¹⁰ *Brazil Gospel Fellowship Mission 2020 Vision Statement*, 2010.

do Sul. It is a cultural and economic center, known for its tourism. It borders the countries of Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay. South Brazil received a large number of European immigrants in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, mostly of Portuguese, German and Italian descent, who have exerted a great cultural influence upon the region.

The state of Rio Grande do Sul is the southernmost state in Brazil. It was first settled by the Amerindian Guarani tribe. The first European settlement was begun in 1627 by the Jesuits, who came to Christianize the Indian tribes. In 1748 immigrants from Portugal's Azores Islands came with their African slaves to establish cattle farms in the vast interior plains or pampas. They became known as "gauchos" because of their cattle herding and ranching ability. The first German immigrants arrived in 1824 and settled as farmers in the Sinos valley, establishing colonies from the town of Sao Leopoldo, near the capital city of Porto Alegre. The Brazilian government offered them land to farm, desiring to populate their virtually empty borderlands and in this way protect the country from enemy attacks by neighboring countries. In the next fifty years nearly thirty thousand Germans immigrated as farmers to Rio Grande do Sul. By 1914, nearly fifty thousand Germans had settled in the state, forming one hundred and forty-two colonies. All told, over a quarter of a million Germans have settled in Brazil, mostly in the

southern states of Rio Grande do Sul and Santa Catarina.¹¹ Today's Brazilian population of Germanic descent totals nearly seven million, the majority still living in south Brazil and speaking a German dialect known as the "Riograndenser Hunsrueckisch," a mixture of Hunsrueckisch, Pomeranian, Pfälzisch, and to a lesser degree Portuguese and Italian. Italian immigration began in 1875, as farmers settled in the state's northeastern mountains. They soon became known for their production of grapes and fine wines. Other European immigrants, mostly from Poland, Ukraine and Russia, also settled in the area.¹²

Rio Grande do Sul is one of the most prosperous Brazilian states, known for its agriculture, viticulture, ranching and industry. It accounts for nearly ten percent of the country's gross domestic product, though only constituting about five percent of the country's population. Its major exports include shoes, leather, grains, beef, and automobiles.¹³

Rio Grande do Sul is also renowned as one of the most culturally rich states in Brazil. Significant cultural elements include "chimarrao," a type of mate tea, as well as "churrasco," a type of barbecue. Their music is a blend of many styles, including Prata's Rhythms, Polca and Chacarera. Fashion also plays a prominent role in the culture, with the region

¹¹ Alessander Kerber, *Wilhelm Pommer: Memória e Trajetória de um Pastor Imigrante no Sul do Brasil*, (São Leopoldo, Rio Grande do Sul: Editora Oikos, 2008), 31-32.

¹² Official government data: *Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatísticas* <http://www.ibge.gov.br> (2006).

¹³ Official government data: *Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatísticas* <http://www.ibge.gov.br> (2006).

providing many of the top national and international fashion models. The state has the highest proportion of books read per capita in Brazil, with Latin America's largest outdoor book fair occurring annually in the capital city of Porto Alegre.

The city of Porto Alegre is one of Brazil's most influential cities and an important cultural, political and economic center for the region. It has one of the highest standards of living among Brazilian cities and is the only Brazilian city listed in LaSalle's *World Winning Cities*. Located on the Guaiba lake, it has become an important port city, as well as one of the country's chief industrial and commercial centers. Porto Alegre's metropolitan area of over four million inhabitants has been home to people from around the world, including Portuguese, Germans, Italians, Polish, as well as Afro- Brazilians, Lebanese, Japanese and Jews.

In 2009, we relocated with our missionary team from northeast to south Brazil to begin planting a church in Campo Bom, a satellite city of the Porto Alegre metropolitan area with a pronounced German culture and influence. Our goal is to launch a multiplying church movement from the Campo Bom church into the greater Porto Alegre area that, in turn, will expand into other urban centers in the south Brazilian states of Rio Grande do Sul and Santa Catarina, training south Brazilians for both pastoral and missionary ministries and encouraging them to develop a missionary vision for their European homeland.

CHAPTER 2

SETTING THE THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

“I will build my church.” This was the heart of the message affirmed by Christ to His disciples in Matthew 16:18. Later, in Matthew 28:19, He challenged His followers to go and make disciples of all nations. Theology is foundational to missions. In fact, they are inseparable. They are never divorced in Scripture. Many of Paul’s most profound theological formulations were written in a missiological context. His passion for missions was enriched by his theology.

In this chapter, pertinent missiological and ecclesiological literature will be referenced, along with insights from Scripture that will lay a Biblical-theological foundation for the launching of a multiplying church movement in communities of predominantly German descent in urban south Brazil.

Multiplying Churches in a Missiological Perspective

Bosch, in his classic book *Transforming Mission*, divides mission history into six epochs or paradigm shifts: that of primitive Christianity, the Hellenistic or Patristic period, the Medieval period, the Reformation period, the Enlightenment period, and the Ecumenical period.¹ We are

¹ David Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, (Maryknoll, NY, NY: Orbis Books, 1996), 181-189.

currently living in one of the most significant transitional moments in the history of Christianity, a moment propelled by the modern missionary movement. Interestingly enough, few Western Christians are aware of the momentous changes that God is effecting in our world today. During the past century, Christianity slowly yet inexorably has been shifting its center of gravity southward to Latin America, Africa and Asia. Using figures from Barrett's *World Christian Encyclopedia*, Andrew Walls estimates that "in 1900 over eighty percent of professed Christians lived in Europe or North America."² Thomas concludes from Barrett's figures that "in 1985...the fulcrum of world Christianity shifted to the South. For the first time, a majority of professing Christians were to be found in the churches of Africa, Asia, Latin America and Oceania."³ By the year 2000, Walls calculated that nearly "sixty percent [of professed Christians] now live in Africa, Asia, Latin America, or the Pacific."⁴ Jenkins, using figures from *The World Christian Encyclopedia*, adds:

some two billion Christians are alive today, about one-third of the planetary total. The largest single bloc, some five hundred and sixty million people, is still to be found in Europe. Latin America, though, is already close behind with four hundred and eighty million. Africa has three hundred and sixty million, and three

² Andrew Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History*, (Maryknoll, NY, NY: Orbis Books, 1996), 173.

³ Norman Thomas, *Classic Texts in Mission & World Christianity*, (Maryknoll, NY, NY: Orbis Books, 1996), 299.

⁴ Andrew Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History*, (Maryknoll, NY, NY: Orbis Books, 1996), 173.

hundred and thirteen million Asians profess Christianity. North America claims about two hundred and sixty million believers.⁵

He goes on to say that if we extrapolate these figures to the year 2025, and assume no great gains or losses through conversion,

there will be around two billion six hundred million Christians, of whom six hundred and thirty-three million would live in Africa, six hundred and forty million in Latin America, and four hundred and sixty million in Asia. Europe with five hundred and fifty-five million would have slipped to third place. Africa and Latin America would be in competition for the title of most Christian continent.⁶

Jenkins concludes that the era of Western Christianity is passing and that the day of Southern Christianity is dawning.

Those, such as I, who have grown up as part of the modern missionary movement, have had the privilege of experiencing firsthand this rapid southward shift of Christianity. We have seen Western Christianity plateau, while Southern Christianity has exploded in exponential growth. The face of Christianity is changing significantly with this southward movement of its heartlands to Latin America, Africa and Asia. Christianity in the Southern hemisphere is much less formal and traditional than its Northern and Western counterpart. The Pentecostal and charismatic movements have swept through majority world Christianity like a tidal wave! According to Jenkins, with the number of Pentecostal believers possibly surpassing the one billion mark before the

⁵ Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 2-3.

⁶ Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 3.

year 2050, it may well be the most successful social movement of the past century, far surpassing the Nazi, Fascist and Communist movements.⁷

Liberation theology has also left its mark on Christianity in Latin America and has provided a theology of praxis for liberation theologies in Africa. Bosch describes liberation theology as “one of the most dramatic illustrations of the fundamental paradigm shift that is currently taking place in mission thinking and practice.”⁸ He goes on to show how the Latin American theology of liberation has manifested itself in black, Hispanic and American Indian theologies, in feminist theology, in South African black theology, and in other theological movements across Africa, Asia and Oceania. Newbigin points out the historical context that gave rise to the liberation theology movement. As Latin American theologians observed that the unregulated operation of the free market system by the first-world nations was slowly and inexorably locking their nations and peoples in its deathly grip and increasing the income gap between the richest and poorest billions of the world’s population by about five hundred percent, they began developing a theology that spoke of “oppressor” and “oppressed” nations and people.⁹ As they saw it, God’s

⁷ Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 8.

⁸ David Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, (Maryknoll, NY, NY: Orbis Books, 1996), 432.

⁹ Lesslie Newbigin, *The Open Secret: Sketches for a Missionary Theology*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 94.

cause is the cause of the oppressed, and God's church is the church that sides with the oppressed against the oppressor. In the companion volume to Bosch's *Transforming Mission*, Thomas, editor of *Classic Texts In Mission & World Christianity*, quotes from the historic Medellin Conference of Latin American bishops to show the courageous breakthrough they forged on the side of the poor and oppressed:

"We will not have a new continent without new and reformed structures, but, above all, there will be no new continent without new men and women, who know how to be truly free and responsible according to the light of the Gospel."¹⁰

The poor economic conditions of the global South have also given rise to a wholistic approach to meeting man's needs in the Southern heartlands of Christianity. The gospel, notes Bosch, must be incarnated in the life and culture of the people who embrace it in both theory and praxis. He adds that the Christian faith must start a "history of its own in each people and its experience of Christ."¹¹ As Christianity has taken root in the global South, it has reflected a growing concern in addressing the whole man in a relevant manner, in ministering to both the soul and the body. Thomas quotes Ziegenbalg as stating that "as the body is bound to the soul, so precisely is the service of the body connected with

¹⁰ Norman Thomas, *Classic Texts in Mission & World Christianity*, (Maryknoll, NY, NY: Orbis Books, 1996), 188.

¹¹ David Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, (Maryknoll, NY, NY: Orbis Books, 1996, 454.

the service of the soul, and these cannot be separated from each other.”¹²

Bosch quotes from the Nairobi Assembly of the WCC:

There is no evangelism without solidarity...A proclamation that does not hold forth the promises of the justice of the kingdom to the poor of the earth is a caricature of the Gospel; but Christian participation in the struggles for justice which does not point towards the promises of the kingdom also makes a caricature of a Christian understanding of justice.¹³

Jenkins points out that the churches of the global South, in a time of great social turmoil and upheaval, have stepped up to “provide a social network that would otherwise be lacking, and help teach members the skills they need to survive in a rapidly developing society.”¹⁴ He adds that these churches are succeeding by meeting the needs of the people in their society, both in matters of gender and race.

With the rapid southward growth of Christianity, there has also been a noticeable increase in tension between the Christian and Muslim worlds. This tension, as noted by Thomas, has existed for centuries, a good example being the writings of the medieval Catholic scholar Thomas Aquinas concerning the issue of compelling Islamic “infidels” to believe.¹⁵ As the two great monotheistic religions of the world meet head to head in

¹² Norman Thomas, *Classic Texts in Mission & World Christianity*, (Maryknoll, NY, NY: Orbis Books, 1996), 47.

¹³ David Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, (Maryknoll, NY, NY: Orbis Books, 1996), 408.

¹⁴ Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 74.

¹⁵ Norman Thomas, *Classic Texts in Mission & World Christianity*, (Maryknoll, NY, NY: Orbis Books, 1996), 24-25.

our century, the potential for conflict will increase, especially in critical points of Africa and Asia. Walls points out the historical reasons for much of Africa being pulled toward the heart of the Islamic world: “the appeal of the preaching of Islam, the sense of Islamic kinship, and the ideal of the Islamic state where justice is performed according to the way of God.”¹⁶ Added to this is the fact that the masses of African people have seen in the corruption and materialism of the wealthy, the ugly face of the supposedly “Christian” Western world in their midst. Jenkins notes that in Nigeria, Sudan, Indonesia, and the Philippines, conflicts between Christians and Muslims have caused intense rivalries, the struggle for converts, and competing attempts to impose moral religious codes by means of secular law, with the potential of provoking civil wars that could develop into international conflicts. He goes on to state that “across the Muslim world, many believers have shown themselves willing to fight for the cause of international Islam with far more enthusiasm than they demonstrate for their individual nation.”¹⁷ He concludes that “religious loyalties are at the root of many of the world’s ongoing civil wars” and that, in many cases, the critical political frontiers of the world are defined by the Christian and Islamic rivalry.¹⁸

¹⁶ Andrew Walls, *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission and Appropriation of Faith*, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002), 111-112.

¹⁷ Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 13.

¹⁸ Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 163.

The rapid southward growth of Christianity has also led to the formation of countless independent church movements. Bosch observes that the seeds for this were planted in the “Reformational descriptions of the church that ended up accentuating differences rather than similarities. Christians were taught to look divisively at other Christians.”¹⁹ He goes on to point out that this trend was further developed in the North American denominations of the mid-nineteenth century. He quotes Niebuhr in saying that the denominations

confused themselves with their cause and began to promote themselves, identifying the kingdom of Christ with the practices and doctrines prevalent in the group...The missionary enterprise, home and foreign, was divided along denominational lines; every religious society became intent upon promoting its own peculiar type of work...²⁰

Later in his book, Bosch describes how this played out in the twentieth century in China, considered the “darling of Protestant missions.” He quotes Beaver as saying that the Chinese Protestant missionary movement appeared as a “chaotic conglomeration of unrelated, overlapping, often competing units seemingly incapable of common planning and action.”²¹ Walls points out that the rapid southward growth of Christianity brought about by the missionary

¹⁹ David Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996), 248-249.

²⁰ David Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996), 330-331.

²¹ David Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996), 458.

movement has opened the possibility of “a score of local Christianities operating independently without interest or concern in one another.”²²

This rapid southward growth of Christianity has also led to syncretism with local animist religions. At the annual meeting of the World Council of Churches in 1991, Korean theologian Hyun Kyung Chung made the statement that “God speaks through Buddha, through shamans and through Christ in my culture.”²³ Jensen also notes that across Southern Africa,

some independent churches have retained a wide range of traditional practices, including polygamy, divination, animal sacrifices, initiation rites, circumcision, and the veneration of ancestors...The new Christian prophets, like the pagan diviners before them, are healer figures who possess supernatural gifts and act as channels to the ancestors.²⁴

He goes on to mention that in some cases they seem to become superhuman messiah figures and cites the case of Shembe’s disciples, who believed him to be “a new incarnate God on Earth.”²⁵

The exponential growth of Christianity in the Southern hemisphere has often led to a blurring of the lines between church and state. Many key religious figures have entered the political arena, often maintaining

²² Andrew Walls, *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission and Appropriation of Faith*, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002), 69.

²³ Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 120.

²⁴ Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 120.

²⁵ Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 121.

their position as religious leaders. Jenkins notes that in many Latin American countries the privileged position enjoyed by the Catholic Church has continued to the present. Among Protestant groups, he cites Brazil's Universal Church of the Kingdom of God, which has its own political party and elects its own bishops as political representatives. He goes on to point out that most of the first generation of independent Africa's political leadership were influential Christian leaders, citing as examples Zambian president Kenneth Kaunda, Senegal's leader Leopold Senghor, Tanzanian Prime Minister Julius Nyerere and Ghanaian leader Kwame Nkrumah. Jenkins also cites Asian examples, such as the Korean Declaration of Independence, in which nearly half of the signatories were influential Christian leaders, as well as Kim Dae Jung, a devout Roman Catholic leader elected president of the Republic of Korea in 1997.²⁶ In Brazil, many religious leaders, both Catholic and Protestant, have invested heavily in political offices with the goal of wielding more power for Christ in political affairs. They desire to improve the lot of the poor, to offer better health care, educational opportunities and jobs to the masses of people, to rehabilitate criminals and drug addicts so that they will once again contribute to society.

The growth of Christianity in the Southern hemisphere has also changed the face of mission practice. Johnson, in his series "Analyzing

²⁶ Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 142-155.

the Frontier Mission Movement and Unreached People Group Thinking,” speaks of four stages of indigenous mission practice.²⁷ Missions began as a pioneer effort, with the missionary braving new frontiers with the gospel of Christ. Often, as Bosch notes, the missionary motives were imperialistic—turning natives into subservient colonists; cultural—infusing native culture with the missionary’s “superior” culture; romantic—living in faraway countries among exotic peoples; or ecclesiastical—exporting one’s own denomination to foreign lands.²⁸ Following these pioneer efforts came the stage of paternalism, where churches were planted and schools and hospitals started on American or European models. Missions grew during this stage at the expense of importing a “Western” brand of Christianity and creating dependency, hard feelings and disunity, often culminating in the missionary being considered “persona non grata.” Missions has now entered the stage of partnership with third-world churches and organizations, where missionaries work side by side with the national church. In this stage, national leaders are developed and encouraged to produce their own theological reflections. Bosch cites examples from Asia and Africa to point out that a “plurality of cultures presupposes a plurality of theologies and therefore, for Third-World churches, a farewell to a

²⁷ Alan Johnson, “Analyzing the Frontier Mission Movement and Unreached People Group Thinking,” *International Journal of Frontier Missions*, 18, no. 3 (Fall 2001), 137.

²⁸ David Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996), 5.

Eurocentric approach.”²⁹ Walls emphasizes the need for increasingly international theological contributions, because “our histories are interdependent and our materials and methods cross-cultural.”³⁰ He adds that theological contributions from the two-thirds world are necessary because Western theology was not written to provide answers, questions or relevant experience for the Third-World Christian context.³¹ Johnson mentions yet a fourth stage in indigenous missionary practice, the participation stage, where missionaries are but one of a host of leaders taking part in the vision of the national church. This vision often includes the sending of national missionaries to the Western missionary’s homeland to minister among the immigrant communities. Johnson points out that these sequential steps of mission practice are “re-happening” at different stages in different places all the time.³²

With the southward growth of Christianity and its involvement in missions, the modern missionary movement is coming full circle. Walls, in his book, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History*, refers to

²⁹ David Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996), 452.

³⁰ Andrew Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History*, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996), 158.

³¹ Andrew Walls, *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission and Appropriation of Faith*, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002), 46.

³² Alan Johnson, “Analyzing the Frontier Mission Movement and Unreached People Group Thinking,” *International Journal of Frontier Missions*, Vol. 18, no. 3 (Fall 2001), 137.

Western Europe as the “prime” mission field in our world today.³³

Jenkins notes that within the Protestant movement in Great Britain alone there are some one thousand five hundred missionaries from fifty nations serving the immigrant churches. He reports a Ugandan missionary serving in England as stating that

it was so depressing when I first arrived to find churches empty, and being sold, when in Uganda there is not enough room in our churches for the people. There is a great need for revival in Britain—it has become so secular and people are so inward-looking and individualistic. The country needs reconverting.³⁴

Upon sending missionaries to England, the Anglican primate of Brazil declared that “London is today’s field of mission. It’s so secular that we have to send people for their salvation.”³⁵ The emerging Southern missionary movement will be facing a crucial challenge that is pivotal to the future of Christianity in Western lands, where the modern missionary movement began. Walls reminds us that the “indigenizing” principle, which states that the gospel is at home in every culture and every culture is at home with the gospel, must also be balanced with the “pilgrim” principle, which states that the gospel is ever in tension with society.³⁶ As the global South’s missionary movement plants churches among its

³³ Andrew Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History*, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996), 258.

³⁴ Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 204-205.

³⁵ Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 205.

³⁶ Andrew Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History*, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996), 8.

immigrant populations in Western lands, it must seek through them to break down barriers and share Christ with the increasingly white, secular, non-Christian population around them. It must learn to treat Western ways and worldviews with sensitivity and contextualize and inculturate the gospel of Christ among peoples that are losing their Christian heritage. The importance of this cross-fertilization of Christianity is emphasized by Newbigin when he states: "We need their witness to correct ours, as indeed they need ours to correct theirs."³⁷ Western American and European Christianity and Southern Latin, African and Asian Christianity do in fact need each other. As Walls notes, "the demographic transformation of the church brought about by the missionary movement opens the possibility of testing our Christian witness by that of others, of experiencing one another's gifts and sharing our combined resources."³⁸

In reflecting upon pertinent missiological literature in the light of Scripture, it can be clearly seen that missions today is a high impact global endeavor. The global church is uniquely equipped because of its missionary nature to be the locus of missions. In fulfilling its missionary mandate, great care must be taken on a number of fronts. As Christianity moves southward, syncretism will be overcome as the gospel

³⁷ Lesslie Newbigin, *Foolishness to the Greeks: The Gospel and Western Culture*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 147.

³⁸ Andrew Walls, *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission and Appropriation of Faith*, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002), 69.

of Christ takes root in local cultures in such a way as to incarnate its message without surrendering its essence. As Christianity expands southward, the proliferation of splinter groups will be overcome as we return to Biblical roots and strive for a more united missionary witness that is God-centered rather than agency or movement-centered. As Christianity grows southward, the appeal of the popular prosperity theologies that are more concerned with what man can get from God than what he can give to Him will be overcome as we return to the centrality of God and His Word; He and He alone must take precedence over all else. Missionary ministry, if it is to be effective today, must occur at the crossroads of Scripture, church and culture. In this multiple, directional flow God works through His Word and His people to accomplish His purposes in His time throughout His world.

In launching a church planting movement in south Brazil among those who come from a predominantly European heritage, priority must be given to exposing them to the momentous changes that God is effecting in our world today as Christianity shifts its center of gravity southward to Latin America, Africa and Asia, challenging them with the need for missions in their own homelands. We must network with them and together seek to reach the increasingly post-Christian West for Christ. As we enter the twenty-first century, we must do our part in linking the old and new heartlands of Christianity so that together we can display the living body of Christ.

Multiplying Churches in an Ecclesiological Perspective

Having presented a missiological perspective for multiplying churches in a majority world setting, we now turn our attention to laying an ecclesiological foundation for multiplying churches among urban populations of predominantly German descent in south Brazil.

Foundational Considerations

There are some general Biblical and theological principles that lay the foundation for a multiplying church movement. In the first place, multiplying churches must be committed to the Word of God as authoritative and inerrant, the only rule of faith and practice for the church. Paul tells us in II Timothy 3:16 that “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness.” As we work among urban populations of predominantly German descent in south Brazil, the Word of God, then, must form the bedrock for multiplying churches.

Second, multiplying churches must be committed to glorifying the person of God as the One who divinely designed the church. Churches multiply because they burst from the heart of God. The Father’s love revealed in the person of His Son dying on the cross for our sins forms the basis for the building of His church; the Holy Spirit, in turn, is the One who empowers the people of God in building His church. Paul tells

us in Ephesians 3:1-7 that the church was born in the heart of God. In Acts 13:2-4, we read that the Holy Spirit set Saul and Barnabas apart and sent them out to spread the gospel of Christ and multiply churches. Prayer taps believers into the life-giving Spirit of God. As we share these truths with those of predominantly German descent in south Brazil's urban areas, it is essential that they understand that the triune God, then, is the architect and driving force behind multiplying churches.

Third, multiplying churches must be committed to ministering as the people of God who are privileged to serve in the church. God works through His people to accomplish His purposes. That is why Peter admonishes believers in I Peter 4:10 to use the spiritual gifts that they have received from the Lord to serve one another in the church as good stewards of the grace of God. Churches will multiply as believers willingly invest in the life-giving service of God. As we minister in urban south Brazilian communities of predominantly German ethnicity, they need to be reminded that the people of God are the ministers for multiplying churches.

Fourth, multiplying churches must be committed to following the leadership that God has placed in the church. In Ephesians 4:11-12 we read that Christ has provided His church with leaders who are to equip believers to serve in the church. In Hebrews 13:17, believers are told to obey their leaders and submit to them. The importance of leaders as God's gift to multiplying churches needs to be emphasized as we work

among ethnic communities of predominantly German descent in south Brazil's urban centers.

Fifth, multiplying churches must be committed to the mission of God of making disciples to build the church. It was the Son of God Himself who commissioned His followers in Matthew 28:18-20 to go and make disciples of all the nations. There is no other divinely ordained way to build the church. As we work among those of predominantly German descent in the urban communities of south Brazil, they need to understand that the mission of God is the heartbeat of multiplying churches.

Hesselgrave presents what he terms the "Pauline Cycle" for planting churches from the book of Acts. His cycle begins with the commissioning of missionaries, followed by the contacting of the audience. The gospel is then communicated, and hearers are converted. The cycle continues with believers being congregated in a local church, and their faith being confirmed. Church leadership is then consecrated, and the local church believers are commended to God. Finally, relationships are continued, and the sending churches are convened.³⁹ His presentation has a broad Biblical base, but needs more dynamic fluidity and tools for cultural exegesis.

Schwarz affirms eight quality characteristics for a growing church:

³⁹ David Hesselgrave, *Planting Churches Cross-Culturally*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000), 47-48.

a church in which the leadership is committed heart and soul to church growth; in which nearly every Christian is using his or her gifts to edify the church; in which most members are living out the faith with power and contagious enthusiasm; in which church structures are evaluated on whether they serve the growth of the church or not; in which worship services are a high point of the week for the majority of the congregation; in which the loving and healing power of Christian fellowship can be experienced in small groups; in which nearly all Christians, according to their gifts, help to fulfill the Great Commission; in which the love of Christ permeates almost all church activities.⁴⁰

He offers supporting tools that are helpful in putting his principles into practice in a local church setting.

Evangelistic Considerations

Launching a multiplying church movement in urban centers of predominantly German descent in urban south Brazil necessitates an emphasis upon evangelism and discipleship, upon building bridges and connecting with people, upon being an integral part of community life. It demands a careful study of the cultural singularities of the people being reached, as well as the incorporation of those singularities into an effective evangelistic and discipleship strategy for reaching them with the gospel of Christ. All believers must be mobilized by means of the local church to evangelize the community. Drummond emphasizes the

⁴⁰ Christian Schwarz, *Natural Church Development*, (Carol Stream, IL: ChurchSmart Resources, 1996), 40.

importance of believers being equipped to defend the Christian worldview among radically differing worldviews.⁴¹

In reflecting upon pertinent literature on evangelism and discipleship from a missiological perspective in the light of Scripture, it is essential that the gospel be given in a context that is theologically sound and culturally appropriate even as we minister among those of predominantly German descent in south Brazil's urban centers. God has a unique strategy for using His unique messengers to reach each unique people group. As Drane points out, meaningful mission flows through meaningful relationships for meaningful results.⁴² The unchanging message of the gospel must be communicated and incarnated in a clear, compelling and appropriate way so that each distinctive people group is presented Christ, for He alone is the answer and gives a whole new meaning to life for those who trust Him. Green points out that an encounter with Christ is built upon the bedrock of repentance and conversion, and transforms the mind, conscience, emotions, will and life through the primary agency of the Word and the Spirit.⁴³

Evangelism is a key New Testament concept. Dayton and Fraser see it is "an indispensable and central component of the mission of the

⁴¹ Lewis Drummond, *Reaching Generation Next*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2002), 74.

⁴² John Drane, *After McDonaldization*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 44.

⁴³ Michael Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church*, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1970), 150-161.

church.”⁴⁴ It is the expression of God’s saving work in Christ, being centered upon His death and resurrection, and is stamped upon the pages of the New Testament. Mittelberg describes it as the “first among equals in the early church’s mission and values.”⁴⁵ In Acts 11:19-20 the early Christians scattered to evangelize and speak the Word; their lives naturally overflowed in evangelism. Peters affirms that the early church practiced “saturation” evangelism.⁴⁶ Garrison calls it “over-sowing.”⁴⁷ A key characteristic of the first century church is that as it grew upward in worship, it also grew outward in evangelism. Evangelism, then, originates in the heart of God, is embodied in the Son of God, empowered by the Spirit of God and proclaimed by the people of God.

The gospel must be enshrined in the life and proclaimed by the lips. As Logan affirms, being good news is essential to sharing the good news.⁴⁸ Green emphasizes the importance of the gospel being presented in personal, household and public settings, with each setting having its priority and value.⁴⁹ The gospel must also be presented in the context of

⁴⁴ Edward Dayton and David Fraser, *Planning Strategies for World Evangelization*, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1990), 46.

⁴⁵ Mark Mittelberg, *Becoming a Contagious Church*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 185.

⁴⁶ George Peters, *Saturation Evangelism*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970), 30.

⁴⁷ David Garrison, *Church Planting Movements*, (Arkadelphia, AR: WIGTake Resources, 2004), 177.

⁴⁸ Robert Logan, *Beyond Church Growth*, (Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revell, 1989), 95.

⁴⁹ Michael Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church*, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1970), 194.

human needs in such a way that people see its relevance and come to Christ as the only One who can satisfy their deepest need. Malphurs suggests the use of four major components when presenting the gospel: initiation—engaging and building a relationship with lost people; prayer—asking God to save lost people; invitation—preparing events and venues in which to invite lost people; and sharing—telling a personal testimony and explaining the gospel message to lost people.⁵⁰

The gospel must be presented in a sound theological context, for without it evangelism can easily degenerate into emotionalism, sentimentalism and gimmicks. Dayton and Fraser caution against a “Christo-paganism” that can so easily replace the gospel.⁵¹ Yesudian warns against a concern for decisions rather than disciples.⁵² Any form of evangelism that manipulates people, regardless of the motive, is unworthy of the gospel. This type of evangelism can lead unsuspecting and honest inquirers into a superficial believism that falls short of a salvation experience. The gospel must be given with solid theological content, for people will not be converted by mere psychological maneuvering, persuasive oratory or emotionalism, but by the power of the Holy Spirit.

⁵⁰ Aubrey Malphurs and Will Mancini, *Building Leaders*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2004), 90.

⁵¹ Edward Dayton and David Fraser, *Planning Strategies for World Evangelization*, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1990), 239.

⁵² Prakash Yesudian, *Practical Evangelism*, (Singapore: Haggai Institute, 2001), 83.

It is striking to note that the Gospels do not climax with the death and resurrection of Christ, but with the giving of His Great Commission. In studying the Great Commission texts, Matthew 28:18-20 emphasizes making disciples with a people group focus—"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations." Mark 16:15-16 emphasizes preaching with an individual person focus—"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation." Both Matthew and Mark connect faith in Christ with the church community through baptism. Luke 24:46-47 emphasizes being a witness with a focus upon the continuity of the gospel's content with the Old Testament—"Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance for forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things." John 20:21 emphasizes the sending with a focus upon the continuity of Christ's mission with that of the church—"as the Father has sent me, I also send you." Acts 1:8 emphasizes being a witness with a focus upon geographic and ethnic expansion in the power of the Holy Spirit—"but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth." When considering these Great Commission texts as a whole, there is a ministry flow from sending to preaching/witnessing to discipling with a view to establishing a faith community. In fact, the book of Acts reveals that the early church

implemented the Great Commission mandate primarily by planting churches.

As multiplying church movements are begun among those of predominantly German descent in south Brazil's urban centers, priority must be given to making disciples within a local church context, where they can grow in the Lord and serve Him. Greenway points to the urgent need for sound Biblical discipleship amid the pluralism and injustice of modern society.⁵³ Issues of competing world views, crime, violence and victimization so prevalent in urban centers can no longer be ignored in discipleship. Bonding with the disciple is an important factor in this process. Christ's command is to make disciples, not converts, and incorporate them into His church. Engel and Dryness affirm that the purpose of the Great Commission is not simply to provide a lifeboat for lost souls, but to create "communities of common people doing uncommon deeds."⁵⁴ Patterson and Scroggins point out that this demands training in obedience as well as knowledge, ever with a local church focus.⁵⁵ Breslin suggests a progressive flow chart linking evangelism, discipleship and church planting: relational activities are begun in the target community; friendships are developed in the target

⁵³ Roger Greenway, "Confronting Urban Contexts with the Gospel," in *Discipling the City*, ed. Roger Greenway, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1992), 39-41.

⁵⁴ James Engel and William Dryness, *Changing the Mind of Missions*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 89.

⁵⁵ George Patterson and Richard Scroggins, *Church Multiplication Guide*, (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 2002), 25.

community; the gospel is shared and people come to Christ in the target community; believers are disciplined in the target community; a committed core is established that will begin the church planting process again in another targeted community.⁵⁶ In summary, disciples making disciples becomes the launching pad for churches planting churches. Churchless discipleship is spurious, unbiblical and empty.

Making disciples involves mentoring believers in the basics of spiritual growth so that they mature as Christians. Hull suggests that this should be done in small group settings where a full arsenal of spiritual gifts and wisdom are present to adequately bring believers to maturity in Christ.⁵⁷ A disciple is both a learner and a servant of Christ with a commitment to obey Him. Drummond suggests a basic discipleship plan for abiding in Christ that includes a rooting and grounding in the salvation experience so that the believer knows he is secure in Christ; an overall grasp of the doctrines of the faith so that the believer knows the essentials of life in Christ; a basic understanding of the Bible and how to read it profitably so that the believer can grow in Christ; an understanding of the importance of prayer so that the believer can pour out his heart in the name of Christ; a grasp of how to gain victory over trials, temptations and testings so that the believer can be

⁵⁶ Scott Breslin, "Church Planting Tracking and Analysis Tool," in *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*, 43, no. 4 (October 2007), 509-512.

⁵⁷ Bill Hull, *The Disciple Making Church*, (Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revell, 1990), 35.

an overcomer in Christ; an understanding of the importance of the local church so that the believer can become an essential part of the church of Christ; and a grasp of the necessity of witnessing and service so that the believer can reach out to those around him for Christ.⁵⁸ Where believers are mentored and shepherded, they will grow in the Christian faith; and where believers are spiritually healthy, churches will also be spiritually healthy. As McIntosh puts it, growing disciples grow churches.⁵⁹ A disciple, then, is a responsible, reproducing believer who is part of a responsible, reproducing church that grows numerically by going and baptizing, and spiritually by teaching and obeying.

As we commit ourselves to the task of making disciples of all nations, leaders will be trained and churches will be multiplied, for the flow of Great Commission ministry culminates in the planting of churches that proclaim and model the gospel of Christ, that train and empower believers for service. Prayer is key to this process; prayer birthed the church in Acts and is the life-line through which God works.⁶⁰ If anything less is done, we risk perpetuating the “Great Omission” rather than obeying the Great Commission. Every generation of believers must work together to see that the whole church takes the whole gospel to the whole world the whole time.

⁵⁸ Lewis Drummond, *Reaching Generation Next*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2002), 129-130.

⁵⁹ Gary McIntosh, *Biblical Church Growth*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2003), 109.

⁶⁰ Jim Cymbala, *Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 71-72.

Leadership Training Considerations

Launching a multiplying church movement in urban centers of predominantly German descent in south Brazil also necessitates an emphasis upon training leaders for service. This is the second pillar of the missiological trilogy given by Christ in Matthew 28:19-20: multiply disciples, multiply leaders, multiply churches. Leadership development is one of today's greatest ecclesiological and missiological priorities. In his book, *Leading Cross-Culturally*, Lingenfelter quotes Banks and Ledbetter's definition of leadership as "aligning people" by translating vision and values into "understandable and attainable acts;" he later provides his own expanded definition of leadership as "inspiring people who participate with you in a community of trust to follow you and be empowered by you to achieve a compelling vision of faith."⁶¹ The goal is to help believers align their gifts and energies for service and then release them in such a way as to maximize ministry and minimize maintenance.

Malphurs points out that Jesus taught in Matthew 20:26-28 that the essence of leadership is service rather than status, selflessness rather than selfishness.⁶² Servant leadership training was at the core of Christ's ministry. He knew how to build trust, develop vision and empower leaders. He prepared His disciples and sent them out in Matthew 10,

⁶¹ Sherwood Lingenfelter, *Leading Cross-Culturally*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 16-19.

⁶² Aubrey Malphurs, *Being Leaders*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2003), 36.

freely empowering them without control or manipulation. He poured His life into His disciples with the goal of building leaders for His church throughout the first-century world.

In reflecting upon pertinent leadership training literature from a missiological perspective in the light of Scripture as it relates to the urban, ethnic south Brazilian context, it is imperative that leaders be trained with a focus upon their personal lives, their family life, their ministry context, and their Biblical and theological expertise. The goal is to see them mature as individuals, spouses, church leaders, and students of the Word.

The goal of training in the area of personal discipleship begins with investing in the development of their life with God. To grow as leaders, they must develop a deep and intimate walk with God. They must develop a plan for reading, studying and meditating upon the Word as well as focus upon the privilege and practice of prayer. They will only understand and fulfill the vision God has for them as they walk obediently with Him.

Personal discipleship training also includes investing in the development of Christian character. Credibility and trustworthiness depend upon character. Convictions will be formed as character is developed. Solid Christian character is the bedrock for solid Christian ministry. Leaders must be above reproach, displaying the character traits listed in I Timothy 3, Titus 1 and I Peter 5. Character must be coupled

with competence. Malphurs quotes Kouzes and Posner in stating that competence is one of the characteristics that people look for and admire most in leaders.⁶³ Competent Christian leaders have the gifts, knowledge and skills, as well as the vision, direction and influence necessary to excel in ministry.

Leadership training in personal discipleship also includes investing in the development of Biblical priorities and goals for life and ministry. A good steward knows how to invest the life given to Him by God with the abilities given to him by God for the purpose given to him by God. Maxwell encourages leaders to invest the bulk of their time working in their God-given areas of greatest strength.⁶⁴ A leader will live out his life to the fullest when he lives it according to Divine priorities. Those priorities must be lived out in a wholistic manner, balancing time for God, spouse, family, ministry, others, and self. Living according to Divine priorities requires the setting of goals for one's personal life, family, and ministry. It is important to set short, mid and long range goals, with periodic evaluations.

The goal of training in the area of marriage discipleship includes investing in the leader's relationship with spouse and family. As a couple, they must develop intimacy on a number of levels. Their spiritual

⁶³ Aubrey Malphurs, *Being Leaders*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2003), 57.

⁶⁴ John Maxwell, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1998), 177.

intimacy is the bedrock of their growth as a couple, as a family, and in ministry. The husband must not only care for his own spiritual life, but that of his spouse and family as well. His first disciple is his wife. We read in Ephesians 5:25-29 that his is the responsibility to love her, nourish her, and cherish her. He must spend time in the Word and in prayer with her. If he establishes this practice in the beginning of his marriage, he will reap rich dividends throughout his married life. As a couple they must also develop personal intimacy. It is important that they take time to get to know each other as persons so as to understand each other's thoughts, feelings, failings and dreams. There should be no hidden secrets, no hidden reservations, and no hidden agendas; on the contrary, there must be open, honest, and unconditional communication. There needs to be a mutual commitment to work on their marriage relationship and expectations, to improve their communication, child raising skills, and family finances, among other things. The deepening of their spiritual and personal intimacy will pave the way for a deepening physical intimacy; it is the natural outflow of a growing marriage relationship.

A leader must also be equipped to invest in the lives of his children. His is the responsibility to lead his family. In I Timothy 3:4-5, Paul makes it clear that a church leader responsible to care for the church of God must manage his own household well and keep his children under control. To manage his household well, a leader must know what God

desires of his household. He must know how to help his family members achieve their fullest God-given potential. He must spend time with them, be their friend, and invest in their lives. His is the privilege of being used by God in molding and shaping their lives as they observe his life, words and actions as a parent.

A leader must also develop his Biblical and theological skills. This includes equipping him with Bible knowledge to the point of gaining expertise in both Bible survey and analysis. He needs to understand the general flow of Scripture as well as the major arguments of each book of the Bible. He needs to have a good grasp of Bible study methods—that is, how to study the Bible; of hermeneutics—that is, how to interpret the Bible; of homiletics—that is, how to teach and preach the Bible; and of apologetics—that is, how to defend the Bible. He needs to have a solid grasp of church history, so as to better understand the dynamics of Christianity in our world today. He needs to study the cults to know how best to assist those enmeshed, helping them distinguish truth from error.

In developing his theological skills, a leader needs to have a working knowledge of Biblical theology—that is, how the doctrines of Scripture are developed within each book of the Bible; of historical theology—that is, how the doctrines of Scripture are developed throughout church history; of practical theology—that is, how the doctrines of Scripture are developed in relation to ministry; and of systematic theology—that is,

how the doctrines of Scripture are developed as a systematized body of truth. The goal of Biblical and theological leadership training is to equip the leader to know what he believes, why he believes, and how he will pass his beliefs on to others. He must know his core ministry values, leadership style, capabilities and philosophy of ministry.⁶⁵ Paul captured the essence of Biblical-theological discipleship in II Timothy 2:1-2, when he encouraged Timothy to grow in Christ and entrust what he had learned to faithful, reproducible believers. Those mentoring other leaders must be humble enough to prepare and release them, permitting them to lead according to their unique God-given abilities.

Leaders must also be trained in the area of ministerial discipleship. The quality of leadership directly affects the quality of ministry. In fact, as Malphurs points out, everything rises or falls on leadership.⁶⁶ Ministerial leadership training includes training in evangelism and missions. This is the heart of the Great Commission. Leaders must know how to share their faith and lead others to Christ. They must know how to disciple those who come to faith in Christ. Leaders must also be trained in counseling to be able to assist others to overcome spiritual struggles and grow in Christ.

⁶⁵ Aubrey Malphurs, *Being Leaders*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2003), 134-135.

⁶⁶ Aubrey Malphurs and Will Mancini, *Building Leaders*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2004), 25.

Leadership training in ministerial discipleship involves equipping leaders for serving in the church. The Great Commission is directly tied to the planting of churches, for wherever the gospel is preached, disciples are baptized, and a local church is born. The goal of training in ministry, then, involves equipping leaders to train others. Paul put it this way in Ephesians 4:11-12: "And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ." In this way the Lord brings growth both in the lives of His people and in the life of His church.

Christ was a leadership trainer par excellence. He masterfully prepared His disciples in three years to impact their world as they made disciples and planted churches in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth. His example in the first century serves as a challenge for us today to train leaders who will multiply churches well into the twenty-first century long after we are gone. It takes leaders to develop leaders. The growth curve in ministry is the leadership curve. Leaders are at their best when they are developing leaders around them, when they are creating a leadership culture. The legacy of a leader is the Christ-like, competent, reproducible leaders he has trained. This is leadership multiplication.

Church Planting Considerations

There are a number of important ecclesiological issues to be considered in the multiplication of churches in a missiological context. In reflecting upon pertinent literature in the light of Scripture as it relates to the urban, ethnic south Brazilian context, it is of extreme importance that we establish living, multiplying churches that are Biblically sound and culturally appropriate in such a way as to produce the greatest effect possible upon the greatest number of people possible. The growth of the church explodes from the heart of God. The life-giving Father offers new life through His life-giving Son who, in turn, has given the church its life-giving mission. Thus, Biblical church growth is rooted in the nature of the Godhead. To develop a church that glorifies God demands that He be at the center of the process. Churches that multiply must also be relevant to the culture in which they are ministering, neither isolating themselves from it nor joining hands with it, neither seeking to dominate it nor lashing out at it, but incarnating themselves in it. Biblical church growth takes place in churches that engage in dynamic interaction with their cultural setting, relating to it without being shaped by it or accommodating to it. Churches must be careful to remain doctrinally pure while culturally relevant. Biblical church growth emphasizes the Christ that transforms culture.

The apostle Paul spoke of his approach to culture in the following way in I Corinthians 9:19-23:

For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all, that I might win the more. And to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the Law, as under the Law, though not being myself under the Law, that I might win those who are under the Law; to those who are without law, as without law, though not being without the law of God but under the law of Christ, that I might win those who are without law. To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak; I have become all things to all men that I may by all means save some. And I do all things for the sake of the gospel, that I may become a fellow partaker of it.

Paul's goal was to communicate the gospel so that the greatest number of people possible could be saved. He therefore limited his own cultural preferences and practices and was willing to abide by the customs of those whom he was trying to reach with the gospel of Christ. He presented the gospel in a culturally relevant way while still remaining faithful to the Word of God. Like Paul, churches that grow need to be committed to preaching the gospel of Christ in a culturally appropriate manner. They must be students of the Scriptures as well as the culture and community to be reached.

Church planting strategies used in missions today in south Brazil can be loosely grouped under three basic models. In the traditional model of planting churches, used by the more conservative faith missions in south Brazil, the missionary plants a church, transitions it to a national pastor and then moves on to plant a new church. His goal is to personally plant the greatest number of churches possible. In the centralizing model of planting churches, used mostly by the Pentecostal and charismatic churches in south Brazil, the missionary plants a strong

mother church and from that church trains pastors and missionaries to plant daughter congregations. His goal is to build a strong central church with as many satellite churches possible. In the multiplying model of planting churches, the missionary invests himself in training national pastors to plant local churches in their cultures, and in training national missionaries to plant churches in other cultures. His goal is to launch a multiplying church movement with as many multiplying disciples, church planters and churches as possible. The multiplying model of planting churches places the missionary strategically in ministry, creates less dependence upon the missionary, avoids missionary-national pastor power struggles, and promotes smoother church leadership transitions.⁶⁷

In using the multiplying model of planting churches among predominantly German communities in south Brazil's urban centers, as leaders are trained, those sensing God's direction into pastoral missionary ministry will be prepared and equipped as church planters. Their first step is to prove themselves in local south Brazilian ministries; once they have done so, they will be apt to plant new churches. The goal is to multiply disciples, church planters and churches being planted. The resulting multiplying church movement will, first and foremost, have learned to look to Christ as Head. Theirs will be a Christ-centered and

⁶⁷ Fred McRae, "The German Church Planting Movement: Have We Missed the Boat?" *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*, 42, no. 2 (April 2006), 188.

satisfied relationship, rather than one that is self-centered and satisfied. Having a Christonomous perspective will empower them to develop leaders from within the local church, for God has gifted each local church with leaders. In I Corinthians 1:7, Paul reminded the local church there that they were not lacking in any gift. Secondly, a Christ-centered multiplying church movement will be capable of generating finances from within the local church. As believers learn to give as God has given to them, needs within the local body will be supplied. Thirdly, a Christ-centered multiplying church movement will be capable of planting new churches by means of the local church. The established local church will have a vision and plan for planting new churches in the surrounding communities. Fourthly, a Christ-centered multiplying church movement will be capable of training and sending missionaries from within the local church. There will be a natural desire to see the gospel spread and churches planted within new cultures. The Lord will, in turn, raise up laborers for this task, for it is He who promised in Matthew 9:38 to send out workers into His harvest. Lastly, a Christ-centered multiplying church movement will be capable of equipping leaders to produce sound Biblical materials for the local church. As trained leaders mature, those gifted in writing need to apply Biblical truths to their own cultural contexts, producing literature that is both theologically sound and culturally relevant. This is what we desire to see in a multiplying church

movement among German immigrant communities in south Brazil's urban centers.

Multiplying churches in urban, ethnic south Brazil also involves a carefully thought out basic plan of action. A team must be carefully and prayerfully selected to head up each church planting effort. The target area must be chosen after prayer and careful study of the community. Initial evangelistic contacts must be made through every avenue possible as bridges of love and hope are built and the gospel of Christ is shared with lost people. As people come to Christ, they need to meet together as a body to grow as disciples of Christ. As learners and servants committed to following and obeying the Lord, they need to grow in worshiping God, edifying one another, and evangelizing the lost. They need to identify with Him in baptism and partake of communion. Those God calls to be leaders among them must be trained and work toward the total mobilization of the believers. In this process, team members must gradually move from what Steffen calls their "phasing in" ministries of evangelizing, discipling and leadership training to their "phasing out" ministries of encouraging, empowering and releasing.⁶⁸ As responsible, reproducing disciples are formed and responsible, reproducing leaders are trained, a responsible, reproducing church will be organized with team members assisting them in beginning other churches in targeted

⁶⁸ Tom Steffen, *Passing the Baton*, (La Habra, CA: Center for Organizational & Ministry Development, 1993), 3.

communities. Once the multiplying church process has been solidified, team members will be free to move on and assist other churches in developing a multiplying church movement. The goal as we minister in south Brazil is ever the multiplication of disciples, leaders and local churches.

Even as we affirm the church planting mandate in missions, Gibbs points out that we must beware of communicating a truncated gospel with a misguided ecclesiology.⁶⁹ It is easy to emphasize the planting of autonomous rather than Christonomous local churches that are self-satisfied rather than Christ-satisfied as they become self-supporting, self-governing, self-propogating, self-missionizing and self-theologizing. Our Western missionary mindset can so quickly resort to majoring on bits and pieces of Biblical truth and Christian experience, while neglecting the big picture of God's revelation to and dealings with man. It is easy to forget in our Western world of instant results that disciple-making, leadership training and church planting is a process that takes time and effort. The vast numbers of people who claim to have been Christians speaks volumes about our methods, though very little if anything about Christ. We need to understand that the Bible not only commands us to make disciples, but is itself a model for doing so that, if followed, will result in the development of effective disciples, trained

⁶⁹ Eddie Gibbs, *ChurchNext*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 220-221.

leaders and multiplying church movements among the peoples of the world.

Summary

In summary the launching of a multiplying church movement in south Brazil must be grounded upon a solid Biblical, theological, missiological and ecclesiological framework. Only in this way will disciples be effectively made, leaders trained, churches planted and the world impacted for Christ. We must follow His blueprint and do His work in His way to accomplish His purposes and reap His results.

CHAPTER 3

SETTING THE CULTURAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction

A proper understanding of culture is critical for effective missionary ministry in today's modern globalized world. Historically, five major views have been proposed to describe the relationship between Christ and culture. Niebuhr's classic work, *Christ and Culture*, synthesizes these views as follows. On one end of the spectrum, the Christ against Culture view of the anticultural radicals states that culture is the cradle of evil under the power of Satan; therefore, culture is to be rejected. At the opposite end of the spectrum, the Christ of Culture view affirms that God works through culture to subdue nature; therefore, culture is to be perfected. In the middle of the spectrum, are the views of Christ and Culture in Paradox, which affirms that culture is corrupt, but that both Christ and earthly authorities must be obeyed—therefore, separation from culture is necessary; the Christ above Culture view, which states that God works both within and outside of culture, which points to Christ—therefore, culture is to be transcended; and the Christ transforming Culture view, which affirms that culture can be converted into good—therefore, culture is to be transformed.¹

¹ H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1951), 40-43.

In relating the gospel to culture, it is important to remember that the gospel was given in the context of culture. As God's self-disclosure, it was given in cultural terms. Every word of the gospel was conditioned by the culture in which those words were written. In fact, the gospel cannot be separated from culture, for on the one hand it is the Word of God given to man and on the other it is the Word of God become flesh for man. Second, it is important to remember, as Newbigin so cogently states, that the gospel "which is from the beginning to the end embodied in culturally conditioned forms, calls into question all cultures, including the one in which it was originally embodied."² All cultures must be evaluated Biblically. Third, it is our privilege and responsibility in missions to proclaim Christ in a culturally appropriate manner, to plant churches that are rooted in Christ and related to culture. We interact with culture every day as we speak and serve the people to whom God has called us as a witness.

Fighting culture leads to enmity with it. Fleeing culture leads to forming a legalistic sub-culture within it. Compromising with culture leads to being engulfed by it. Controlling culture leads to imposing upon it. Influencing culture leads to interacting transformationally with it. As we obey Christ's command to make disciples of all nations, we will be agents of cultural change, whether we are aware of it or not.

² Lesslie Newbigin, *Foolishness to the Greeks: The Gospel and Western Culture*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 4.

Missions, then, must relate the Word to the world in a Biblically balanced manner. If we ignore the Word, we will have nothing to offer the world. If, on the other hand, we ignore the world, we betray the Word that sends us into the world. I believe we need a high view of the Word and a balanced view of the world. The Lausanne Covenant states it well when it says that as the Word of God given to man, the Scriptures are inerrant and “the only infallible rule of faith and practice,” according to II Timothy 3:16-17 and II Peter 1:20-21. As human beings created in the image of God living within cultures, some of our culture is “rich in beauty and goodness.” As fallen human beings, Genesis 4:21-22 and Mark 7:8-9, 13 teach us that all of our culture is “tainted with sin and some of it is demonic.”³ Genesis 1:26-28 teaches that God created man and woman in His image and was the originator of human culture when He commanded them to rule over their environment. According to Genesis 3, man fell and both he and his work have been disfigured and distorted by selfishness and sin, though he is still created in God’s image and reflects the creativity of his Creator, having the capacity to be productive in his accomplishments. Thus, though God has ordained culture, He does not order man’s cultures.⁴

³ Lausanne Covenant. Lausanne: International Congress on World Evangelization, 1974, paragraph 10.

⁴ David Hesselgrave, *Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991), 117.

We, then, as Christians are privileged to influence culture, knowing that the gospel is the power of God to save believing man, work change in his life, and through him to work change in his culture. To use Andrew Walls' analogy, as a people called out by God, we are to live as pilgrims in a multi-cultural world,⁵ studying the lives and beliefs of the people to whom we are ministering, learning to live in a culturally appropriate manner with them, discovering and answering their significant questions in light of the Scriptures, recognizing that God is already at work in their culture and, thus, working for change from within.

The launching of a multiplying church movement among the urban centers of predominantly German descent in south Brazil must be built upon the cultural and social framework of their heritage. In this chapter we will study who they are, what led them to settle in Brazil, the cultural patterns and practices they have continued from their European heritage, as well as their unique contributions to south Brazilian society, so as to understand how best to build bridges into their communities, connect with them in their cultural setting, develop lasting friendships with them, and share with them the gospel of Christ in a relevant manner. We will also consider their moral and cultural moors, their traditions, as well as the religious movements that impacted their

⁵ Andrew Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History*, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996), 54.

communities, enabling us to more effectively plant churches in their communities.

German Immigrant Life in South Brazil

In 1824 the first German immigrants arrived in the south Brazilian town of Sao Leopoldo, part of today's Porto Alegre metropolitan area. The political and economic situation in Europe at the turn of the nineteenth century was bleak. Napoleon had proclaimed an absolutist liberation under French hegemony.⁶ By 1806, his empire included France as well as a number of Germanic states. The Prussian victory over Napoleon in 1813 led to the forming of the Germanic Confederation. This loosely connected federation of states sought to preserve the political power of the aristocracy, while at the same time freeing the peasants from forced labor to their landlords. The result was disastrous for the peasants. Dreher comments that the nobles remained with the lands and money while the peasants found themselves without land and with rising debt. This precarious economic situation, especially in central Europe, left peasants facing the bleak prospect of eking out a meager existence. Few alternatives remained for this hardworking class of people.⁷

⁶ José Edimar de Souza, *O Pastor Klingelhoeffer e a Revolução Farroupilha*, (São Leopoldo, Rio Grande do Sul: Editora Oikos, 2009), 19.

⁷ Martin Dreher, "Apontamentos para a História da Comunidade Evangélica de Campo Bom," in *Sal da Terra*, Angela Sperb, ed., (Canoas, Rio Grande do Sul: Gráfica Editora, 1992), 13.

At the same time, technological advances in medicine led to a demographic explosion in Europe. In Prussia alone, between 1815 and 1848, the population nearly doubled, from ten million to nineteen million inhabitants. One of the few viable options left for many at the time was to immigrate to other lands, including Brazil. In fact, Dreher notes that from 1800 to 1845, approximately one and a half million people left Europe and immigrated to other continents. From 1845 to 1875, immigration to other lands increased to nine and a half million people. After 1900, nearly one and a half million people left the European continent every year until mid-century.⁸

The Brazilian political scene in the early nineteenth century was marked by profound transformations. Napoleon's occupation of Portugal in 1806 led to the flight of the Portuguese royal family to Brazil. The resulting cultural, social, economic and political transformations profoundly affected Brazil, as it opened its doors to trade, especially with Protestant European nations, and, in particular, with England, which had provided protection for the Portuguese royal family in its flight to Brazil. Rio de Janeiro, the new capital of the Portuguese royalty, soon became a bustling business and cultural center, boasting a thriving port, as well as schools, universities, libraries, theatres, and the royal printing press, among others.

⁸ Martin Dreher, "Apontamentos para a História da Comunidade Evangélica de Campo Bom," in *Sal da Terra*, Angela Sperb, ed., (Canoas, Rio Grande do Sul: Gráfica Editora, 1992), 13.

In 1821, Dom Joao VI and his royal court returned to Portugal, leaving his son, Dom Pedro I, as the prince regent. The desire of the Portuguese parliament was that Brazil return to its pre-royalty days as a Portuguese colony. However, the Brazilian people had tasted the benefits of freedom and would be satisfied with nothing less than independence from Portugal. While Dom Pedro I sought to appease both sides by diminishing government expenses and lowering taxes, he managed to raise the ire of the Portuguese parliament, which demanded his immediate abdication and return to Portugal under the pretense of completing his education. The political leaders of Brazil, not wanting to lose their privileges, united to convince Dom Pedro I to remain. In 1822, Dom Pedro I declared Brazil's independence from Portugal, thus opening the doors for the country to constitute its own army and actively pursue a policy of immigration.

Given the volatile political situation at the time in Europe, Dom Pedro I was naturally careful to avoid seeking immigrants from countries such as France, Spain, Holland and England, which already had their own colonies. Opening the doors to immigrants from these nations would obviously involve a significant risk; thus, his preference for immigrants from Germany, Switzerland and Italy. Added to this was the fact that his wife, Leopoldina, who was from the Hapsburg dynasty of Germanic descent, looked favorably upon welcoming immigrants from the Germanic states. Souza notes that there were yet other politically

expedient reasons that led Dom Pedro I to do so. With the country's declaration of independence, there was an urgent need to form a national army to combat any troops sent from Portugal. The presence of German soldiers was so significant that they formed four battalions in the Brazilian army. There was also the need to populate the country's southern borders with German colonists to secure them from attacks by the Spanish, while at the same time stimulating agricultural production, substituting slave labor, and driving out the native Indian tribes. Bringing in German immigrants was also a means of forming a new class of hardworking autonomous farmers within the Brazilian society that until then consisted of a majority of slaves, a minority of landowners and a rising middle class. There was also the added benefit of increasing the country's white population. Dom Pedro I was concerned with a potential uprising of African slaves in Brazil and saw in the rapidly growing families of German colonists a way to increase the twenty-three percent of whites that existed in Brazil at the turn of the nineteenth century.⁹

With this in mind, Dom Pedro I sent Major Schaeffer in 1822 to central Europe to enlist German peasants to immigrate to Brazil. Dreher observes that the following was promised to those who signed up:

“1st To pay the passage of Germans who desired to colonize Brasil...”

⁹ José Edimar de Souza, *O Pastor Klingelhoeffler e a Revolução Farroupilha*, (São Leopoldo, Rio Grande do Sul: Editora Oikos, 2009), 39-40.

“2nd To accept upon arrival the German immigrants into the Empire as Brazilian citizens.”

“3rd To not place any impediment upon worship, whatever may be the religion of the colonists, this liberty being guaranteed by the constitution of the Empire.”

“4th To give each colonist or head of family a parcel of property free of cost, measuring one hundred and sixty thousand square cubits, being part field for planting and part virgin forest.”

“5th To freely give each colonist, according to the size of his family, horses, bulls, cows, sheep and pigs.”

“6th To pay each colonist a daily sum of one frank, the equivalent of one hundred and sixty reais, for the first year and half of that amount for the second year per family member.”

“7th To be exempt from paying taxes or from any service to the State during the first ten years.”

“8th To not be allowed during their first ten years as colonists to make any business transactions involving properties granted to them, after which time they would be free to do whatever they desired with their properties, having, however, to pay a tithe of the produce of their fields.”¹⁰

It is no wonder that landless peasants living in a hopeless situation in central Europe considered immigration to Brazil and the subsequent land that would be theirs as an enticing alternative. Many enlisted, secured their belongings, said their goodbyes, seeking the blessings of their local pastor or priest. Hunsche comments on the difficult conditions they faced in crossing the Atlantic Ocean. The ships that took them from Europe to Brazil were overcrowded. They were treated without a minimum of respect or dignity, being kept in “cubicles” measuring

¹⁰ Martin Dreher, Philip Stucky trans. “Apontamentos para a História da Comunidade Evangélica de Campo Bom,” in *Sal da Terra*, Angela Sperb, ed., Canoas: Gráfica Editora, 1992, pp. 38-39.

approximately one foot in width, two feet in height and five feet in length. They were destitute of the usual amenities, such as light and adequate hygienic conditions. The food was sparse and the drinking water sparingly doled out. The trip was long and difficult, taking three to four months to cross the Atlantic. Thousands lost their lives at sea, never stepping foot on Brazilian soil.¹¹

Lang recounts one immigrant's description of the crossing of the Atlantic as follows:

Our farewell to friends, family and relatives was not easy, considering such a long and arduous trip. Dozens of people, especially young people, were housed at the immigrant lodging in Hamburg, waiting for a ship to depart to Brazil. We departed from Germany after a church service, asking God to grant us a safe trip. After three days we arrived in the North Sea; sailing the English Channel took another three days, and then we were on the high seas. There we saw the water teeming with many different kinds of fish...entire schools of fish sometimes followed us and once in a while one or another fish would land on the ship's deck. These became an object of our curiosity, being passed from hand to hand before being thrown back into the sea. The ocean nights greatly impressed us, with a clear, star-filled sky accompanied by a gentle breeze. The surface of the gently rolling waves shined and sparkled. The starlit sky reflected off the surface of the waters with a golden hue....

Our small ship with one hundred and two immigrants on board was a little over ninety feet long and moved quickly. Our trip was peaceful for about seventy days...a storm suddenly hit us...a large wave swept over the deck. We were at the mercy of the storm for two weeks...The fury silenced. We thanked God for His protection and salvation. The winds shifted and it took us another five weeks to reach our destiny. Our food supply began to dwindle and had to be rationed. Our potable water was also coming to an end. We were hungry and thirsty, but sought to carry our cross with thanksgiving and patience.

¹¹ Carlos Hunsche, *Pastor Heinrich W. Hunsche e os Começos da Igreja Evangélica no Sul do Brasil*, (São Leopoldo, Rio Grande do Sul: Editora Rotermond, 1981), 35-38.

We finally arrived at the port of Rio Grande...We praised God once more for His great work. Tears of joy ran down our faces.”¹²

Upon their arrival in the south Brazilian province of Sao Pedro do Rio Grande do Sul, the German immigrants were sent to the newly established settlement of Sao Leopoldo, named in honor of Leopoldina, Dom Pedro I's wife. Approximately five thousand immigrants arrived between 1824 and 1840. In 1831, Dom Pedro I abdicated his throne in favor of his son, Dom Pedro II, who, because of his young age, initially ruled the country as co-regent with a representative from the north province of Brazil, one from the south province, as well as a brigadier. These were years of constant political tension and turmoil.

Because of this unexpected turn of events in Brazil, very little of what was promised to the colonists by Dom Pedro I was given them. Souza notes that they faced numerous obstacles and adversities, being deprived of their political rights, required to pay taxes and often conscripted into the Brazilian army. Because of inept governing authorities, the first colonists were forced to wait nearly a year to receive the plots of land promised to them. The lands originally given them had to be taken back because of the lack of precision in the measurements of the plots and later redistributed, creating incredible confusion over land rights for years to come. When they finally received their plots of land and began

¹² Guido Lang, Philip Stucky trans. *Campo Bom: História e Crônica*, (Campo Bom, Rio Grande do Sul: Papuesta, 1996), 23-25.

settling them, cutting down trees and preparing the land to farm, they still had to deal with Indian tribes that roamed the area.¹³

Brazilian immigrant legislation was precarious and incomplete, facilitating the marginalization and isolation of German immigrant communities from the mainstream of Brazilian society. From 1824 to 1840, they survived on subsistence farming with practically no assistance from the Brazilian government.¹⁴ Bloss observes that they initially planted wheat and rye, which they farmed in Europe, with disastrous results. In time, they learned to plant corn, potatoes, beans, sugar cane, tobacco, and manioc roots, which were better adapted to the South American climate and soil, with good results. They also raised livestock, initially chickens and pigs.¹⁵ They depended upon family members for labor and in special cases sought the assistance of relatives and neighbors. This, in time, led to the development of closed German immigrant settlements, isolated from the remainder of south Brazilian society. The little contact they had with outsiders was for commerce and trade. In this ethnically homogeneous context, German language, culture, traditions and religion were naturally preserved.

¹³ José Edimar de Souza, *O Pastor Klingelhoeffer e a Revolução Farroupilha*, (São Leopoldo, Rio Grande do Sul: Editora Oikos, 2009), 53-55.

¹⁴ Angela Sperb, "Germanicidade e Cidadania: A Escola na Trajetória da Comunidade," in *Sal da Terra*, Angela Sperb, ed., (Canoas, Rio Grande do Sul: Gráfica Editora, 1992), 47.

¹⁵ Raul Bloss, *Campo Bom: 1825-1976*, (Campo Bom, Rio Grande do Sul: Prefeitura Municipal), 12.

Family life comprised the basic structure of the German immigrant communities. As Souza notes, one colonist wrote in 1842, “without my family I am a nobody.”¹⁶ Their first homes were simple wood and clay structures with thatched roofs. Their diet consisted of corn and squash and whatever meat they could hunt. On the homestead, family members assisted each other with household chores, the older orienting the younger. Children were initially taught to read and write in the home. Births, weddings, special occasions, funerals, all were shared in family.

Community life was also foundational to the German immigrant settlements. According to Lang, each held their own special annual celebrations known as “kerb,” when they gathered together to commemorate the founding of their community. Friends and relatives from surrounding settlements came to celebrate. There was always an abundance of food; meat was plentiful, as were breads, cakes and canned goods. The festivities began early on Sunday morning with fireworks, followed by the ringing of the church bells calling the people to a special service where they sang, the choirs and bands performed and the pastor or priest thanked God for another year of existence as an immigrant community. The immigrants then followed the traditional German band through the community inviting all to the ballroom festivities. The day was spent eating, drinking, playing, visiting and

¹⁶ José Edimar de Souza, *O Pastor Klingelhoefter e a Revolução Farroupilha*, (São Leopoldo, Rio Grande do Sul: Editora Oikos, 2009), 64.

preparing for the main event when all would make their way to the dance hall. It was a joyous occasion with typical German musical bands livening up the traditional German dances with their clarinets, flutes, trumpets, violins and accordions.¹⁷

As the first community structures were built, the German immigrants brought with them a simple communal lifestyle centered around church and school. Church and school soon became the hallmark of immigrant Protestantism in south Brazil, with the pastor often being both the religious leader and schoolmaster.

Schools were indispensable for the propagation of Germanic life, culture and religion. Public schools did not exist at the time in the German immigrant communities, since the Brazilian government was still structuring its educational system. According to Sperb, in 1857, Brazil had three thousand three hundred schools with an attendance of seventy thousand students, representing less than two percent of its population. By 1869, the number of schools had increased to three thousand three hundred and sixty-five and the number of students to one hundred thousand. By 1879, the number of schools had reached five thousand with a total attendance of some two hundred thousand

¹⁷ Guido Lang, *Reminiscências da Memória Coletiva de Campo Bom*, (Campo Bom, Rio Grande do Sul: Papuesta, 1997), 31-33.

students, representing approximately three percent of the country's population.¹⁸

With the lack of public schools in the immigrant settlements, the German immigrant communities began their own schools, with the schoolmaster being initially either the pastor or someone from within the settlement chosen by the community. Discipline was strictly enforced. The goal was to give the students a working knowledge of reading, writing, math, history and geography. The school year was necessarily short, due to adverse weather conditions and harvest time, when all family members were needed. At the conclusion of the school year, each student was publicly examined and evaluated by a joint commission, including the schoolmaster and local authorities, who approved or disapproved of their promotion to the succeeding grade.¹⁹

Most of the teaching was done in German. The few books that existed were brought from Germany, with virtually no educational material available in Portuguese. With the arrival of Pastor Wilhelm Rotermond to the south Brazilian immigrant colonies in 1874, a printing press, publishing house and Christian bookstore were begun in the county seat of Sao Leopoldo. Rotermond published a series of school books, many of which are still used in the Lutheran immigrant schools to this day.

¹⁸ Angela Sperb, "Germanicidade e Cidadania: A Escola na Trajetória da Comunidade," in *Sal da Terra*, Angela Sperb, ed., (Canoas, Rio Grande do Sul: Gráfica Editora, 1992), 48.

¹⁹ Carlos Hunsche, *Pastor Heinrich W. Hunsche e os Começos da Igreja Evangélica no Sul do Brasil*, (São Leopoldo, Rio Grande do Sul: Editora Rotermond, 1981), 69-70.

Sperb notes that by 1900, there were one hundred a fifty-five Lutheran immigrant schools; by 1924, that number had increased to four hundred and fifty schools. With the coming of World War II, a modernization movement swept through the country that was in its essence nationalistic, leading President Vargas to declare a “New State.” One of the new measures instituted nationwide was the requirement that all teaching in schools had to be given in the Portuguese language. It was further determined that all speaking, both inside and outside of the classroom, was to be done only in Portuguese. This nationalization process brutally affected the Lutheran immigrant schools, due in great part to the Brazilian government’s mistrust of the German immigrant community during the war against Nazi Germany. The Lutheran immigrant school system was de-structured and decimated, forcing the closure of the majority of the schools. Today, there remain one hundred and twenty-three Lutheran immigrant schools scattered throughout Brazil, one hundred and three of them being located in the south Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul.²⁰

²⁰ Angela Sperb, “Germanicidade e Cidadania: A Escola na Trajetória da Comunidade,” in *Sal da Terra*, Angela Sperb, ed., (Canoas, Rio Grande do Sul: Gráfica Editora, 1992), 51.

German Immigrant Christianity in South Brazil

German immigrants carried their religious traditions with them from Europe, both Roman Catholicism and Lutheran Protestantism. As a Portuguese colony, Brazil initially only permitted the Roman Catholic religion; however, in 1808, Dom Joao VI opened the doors to Protestantism in exchange for English naval protection from Napoleon. In principle, Protestant religions were tolerated, though in practice they were often severely restricted. Kerber notes that they were not initially allowed to perform marriage ceremonies; thus, children from Protestant unions were considered illegitimate and unable to receive inheritance from their parents. They were also not permitted to be buried in cemeteries, since at the time the cemeteries were under the authority of the Roman Catholic Church.²¹ Lang adds that with the arrival of the Jesuits in the colonies in 1842, many Protestant immigrant families were reconverted, while those who resisted were considered by them to be heretics. In general, both Roman Catholics and Lutheran Protestants maintained distance one from the other.²²

The first Lutheran services were held in homes, where they sang, prayed and read from the Bible. Dreher notes that mothers were

²¹ Alessandro Kerber, *Wilhelm Pommer: Memória e Trajetória de um Pastor Imigrante no Sul do Brasil*, (São Leopoldo, Rio Grande do Sul: Editora Oikos, 2008), 32.

²² Guido Lang, *Reminiscências da Memória Coletiva de Campo Bom*, Campo Bom, Rio Grande do Sul: Papuesta, 1997, 36.

instrumental in preserving the catechismal tradition, leaving a profound feminine imprint upon the Lutheran movement in south Brazil that is still felt to this day.²³ The Bible, catechism and the hymnal were of fundamental importance in the services held in homes.

Music played an important role in these family and community celebrations, as well as in the life of the church. It was in the home that the children learned to sing and play various musical instruments including the clarinet, trumpet, flute, and violin, among others. Music also played a key role in the life of the church and school. From these humble immigrant beginnings, choirs were formed, becoming an integral part of community life. In time orchestras were developed, adding an embellishing touch to the religious liturgy of the church as well as to the community's festive occasions.

Schools were also important as a means of preserving Germanic culture and religion. Children were alphabetized so that they could read the Bible, study the catechism in preparation for confirmation, as well as participate in the Sunday services.

The women's auxiliary societies also had a profound impact upon the Lutheran immigrant communities. Sperb notes that they were initially formed to give assistance to community members in need. In time they

²³ Martin Dreher, "Apontamentos para a História da Comunidade Evangélica de Campo Bom," in *Sal da Terra*, Angela Sperb, ed., (Canoas, Rio Grande do Sul: Gráfica Editora, 1992), 17.

expanded their outreach to include work in hospitals and prisons. Still later, they were instrumental in raising funds for the construction of church buildings, schools, and hospitals.²⁴

Churches were foundational as a means of preserving religious beliefs and traditions. The role of the pastor was essential in bringing unity and solidarity to the immigrant community. Pastors were initially chosen from among the colonists, due to the lack of formally trained pastors available. However, these lay colonial pastors were soon unable to serve the increasing number of immigrant communities being established. As a result, the first wave of immigrants often felt alone in their struggle to survive the rigors of subsistence farming and educate their families in the Lutheran faith. Hunsche notes that forty years of struggles and hardships passed before the German Lutheran Church finally awakened to its ecclesiastical responsibilities on behalf of its immigrant populations, bringing over formally trained pastors from Germany.²⁵ By this time, the immigrant communities had already begun to fall prey to materialism and to the theological liberalism being imported from Europe.

As Kleingunther, pastor of the Lutheran church in Porto Alegre, noted in his revealing report to the German Lutheran headquarters:

²⁴ Angela Sperb, "OASE: O Serviço da Mulher na Comunidade," in *Sal da Terra*, Angela Sperb, ed., (Canoas, Rio Grande do Sul: Gráfica Editora, 1992), 149-151.

²⁵ Carlos Hunsche, *Pastor Heinrich W. Hunsche e os Começos da Igreja Evangélica no Sul do Brasil*, (São Leopoldo, Rio Grande do Sul: Editora Rotermond, 1981), 122-123.

we must not be overly severe with these immigrants for their ignorance and stupidity, because for twenty to thirty years they were without ecclesiastical care and only interested in their own bodies and pleasures...Here one cannot speak of Christianity. I can preach whatever I desire; it doesn't matter. The people simply tell me they don't believe. I am not exaggerating when I say that half of the church here openly confesses that they believe neither in God nor in the devil. They consider themselves too enlightened for this kind of teaching and assure me that they can live without this, since all existence ends with death. Even the church moderator told me that it would be an exaggeration to conduct a church celebration every Sunday... The church community consists, in great part, of wealthy businessmen and artisans. They are completely caught in the clutches of materialism and dominated by the desire for money.²⁶

By 1900, the Lutheran churches in south Brazil began affiliating themselves with the Lutheran church in Germany. Dreher comments that this, in effect, retarded the formation of an autonomous Brazilian Lutheran Church movement. With the coming of the two world wars, Brazil sided with the allies against Germany, beginning a painful period of suffering, persecution and even imprisonment for many German Lutherans in south Brazil. Under the watchword of nationalization, the Brazilian government systematically attacked Germanic culture, beginning with the Lutheran schools, which were not permitted to teach in German. Later, the churches were affected with the prohibition of preaching and conducting the liturgy in German. With the onset of World War II, many German pastors were imprisoned and thrown into

²⁶ Carlos Hunsche, Philip Stucky trans. *Pastor Heinrich W. Hunsche e os Começos da Igreja Evangélica no Sul do Brasil*, (São Leopoldo, Rio Grande do Sul: Editora Rotermond, 1981), 182-183.

concentration camps.²⁷ The German Lutheran Church in south Brazil could no longer remain more German than Lutheran. If in the past it was closely connected to its Germanic identity, in the post-World War II period that would no longer be possible. In 1949, the Brazilian Lutheran synods formed a national federation called The Evangelical Church of Lutheran Confession in Brazil. Nearly all of the succeeding pastors have been selected from among the communities of Germanic descent in Brazil, rather than being sent from Germany. Kannenberg comments that only recently has the Brazilian Lutheran Church begun to awaken to its missiological responsibilities to share the gospel with others who are not of Germanic descent.²⁸ The first tentative steps have been taken in recent years to begin social projects and plant Lutheran churches in needy regions of northeast and north Brazil.

The Lutheran church in south Brazil is presently at a crossroads. It must return to its origins and seek its identity once again in the gospel, grounding its ecclesiology and developing its missiology solidly in Scripture. If not, it faces the danger of losing its focus and lapsing into lifeless culture Christianity. The future of the Lutheran church as an evangelical movement in south Brazil hangs in the balance.

²⁷ Martin Dreher, "Apontamentos para a História da Comunidade Evangélica de Campo Bom," in *Sal da Terra*, Angela Sperb, ed., Canoas, Rio Grande do Sul: Gráfica Editora, 1992], 42-43.

²⁸ Interview conducted on September 19, 2011 with Hilmar Kannenberg, former Lutheran pastor and present administrator of the German Lutheran educational complex in Sao Leopoldo.

As we observe the religious pattern of today's predominantly Germanic communities in south Brazil, it is worth noting that Western Europe, the heartland of German immigration to south Brazil and once the heartland of Christianity, is fast becoming a post-Christian, pagan society opposed to the gospel. In fact, it has become one of the most challenging frontiers in modern missions today. The Lausanne Congress on World Evangelism's workshop on nominalism states that seventy-five to eighty percent of professing Christians today—about one billion people—are nominal, that is, Christians in name only, making it one of the largest groups to be evangelized.²⁹ Western Europe comprises the heart of this group, while the urban population of predominantly German descent in south Brazil is quickly following in the steps of its motherland. Those caught in the trap of lifeless culture Christianity need to hear the gospel and come to a saving knowledge of Christ, who is the way, the truth and the life, as they grapple with the tentacles of modernity's materialism, relativism, and secularism that are permeating their culture and society.

Modernity's empire has become the great alternative to the kingdom of God, satisfying its subjects with pale counterfeits of kingdom realities.³⁰ It has increased choice and change, while at the same time decreasing

²⁹ Peter Kuzmic, "A Credible Response to Secular Europe," *Evangelical Review of Theology*, January 1994, 52.

³⁰ Os Guinness, "Mission Modernity: Seven Checkpoints on Mission in the Modern World," in *Mission as Transformation: A Theology of the Whole Gospel*, edited by Vinay Samuel & Chris Sugden, (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 1999), 296.

commitment and conviction. It represents the greatest human advances, while at the same time leads to the greatest assaults on humanity. It unites the world while dividing it; it reduces ignorance while destroying meaning; it creates wealth while impoverishing its subjects. It provides unbelievable technological advances, while at the same time bringing untold persecution and suffering. It seeks to decrease Christianity's influence upon culture, while at the same time increasing culture's influence upon Christianity. It seeks to bring Christianity into captivity by relativizing the absolutes of the Word of God and offering a wide range of enticing religious options in its place. Religious pluralism has become the norm. The rise of atheism, agnosticism and secularism has been modernity's legacy.

In observing the impact of Western culture upon the German immigrant culture in urban south Brazil, it is worth noting Newbiggin's assessment. He states that in the post-Enlightenment ordering of Western society "nature has taken the place of God as the ultimate reality...and the nation-state has taken the place of God as the source to which we look for happiness, health, and welfare."³¹ He goes on to point out that the result of the post-Enlightenment project for Western society is that "all human activity is absorbed into labor. It becomes an

³¹ Lesslie Newbiggin, *Foolishness to the Greeks: The Gospel and Western Culture*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 27.

unending cycle of production for the sake of consumption.”³² This effectively excludes questions of ultimate purpose from the public world. As Newbiggin so cogently states,

A strange fissure runs right through the consciousness of modern Western man. The ideal that he seeks would eliminate all ideals. With dedicated zeal he purposes to explain the world as something that is without purpose. This fissure becomes visible in two ways: in the dichotomy between the public and the private worlds, and in the dichotomy in thought between facts and values. The public world is a world of facts that are the same for everyone, whatever his values may be; the private world is a world of values where all are free to choose their own values and therefore to pursue such courses of action as will correspond with them.³³

This dichotomy has effectively eliminated from the modern Western worldview the possibility of a system of values and ultimate purpose to be founded upon facts so understood. Ironically, although modern Western society engages in purposeful activity and evaluates that activity according to its success in achieving the purposes it set out to accomplish, that same society also accepts as the underlying view of this purposeful activity an understanding of the world from which purpose has been eliminated. Thus, the distinguishing mark of Western culture in its public philosophy is pragmatic atheism, a mark observable in the professional elite of south Brazil’s urban population of predominantly German descent.

³² Lesslie Newbiggin, *Foolishness to the Greeks: The Gospel and Western Culture*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 30.

³³ Lesslie Newbiggin, *Foolishness to the Greeks: The Gospel and Western Culture*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 35-36.

Summary

The urban communities of predominantly German descent have left their mark upon south Brazilian society. Theirs is the legacy of a solid work ethic, being hard-working, independent, autonomous entrepreneurs who pass their family business and work ethic on to their children and to succeeding generations. Coupled with a solid work ethic is their enterprising spirit, always pragmatic, resourceful and inventive. Many south Brazilian businesses still reflect to this day this distinctive German mindset.

Theirs is also the legacy of closely knit families, with heads of households preserving and passing down family values to their posterity. Intertwined with family values are community traditions meticulously maintained by each town through festivals that preserve their Germanic roots.

Theirs is the legacy of religious traditions, with many families of German descent tenaciously clinging to the values and customs of their church of origin. Church and school form the heart of their community life, with religion and education often woven together in preserving cultural values and preparing their progeny for life in society.

As we consider planting churches in urban areas of south Brazil with a predominantly German immigrant culture, we must understand the legacy of their cultural heritage and celebrate the positive aspects of their

work ethic, creativity, family traditions, way of life and religious heritage, among other things, incorporating them into the dynamic of a church rooted in the Word and planted within their culture.

Care must be taken to not domesticate the gospel, introducing as normative in the churches planted the traditional Western “Christian” church norms, thus stifling and stymieing their own culturally appropriate expressions of the truth of the gospel. Why not find culturally appropriate and Biblically sound church service, music and dress patterns for those coming to Christ from the majority world? Why not prepare and encourage them to produce Christian literature which applies Biblical principles to the specifics of their own culture? Those skilled in exegeting the message must also become skilled in exegeting the culture.

We must avoid creating islands of Christianity, while at the same time ignoring the culture in which we minister. It is easy to fall into the trap of emphasizing individualism over community, resulting in a stunted sociology. God’s desire is to see the church impact its world. A wholistic approach to sharing the gospel of Christ, then, includes both verbal evangelization and personal identification. The vertical and horizontal foci of the cross need to be displayed as the gospel impacts culture, for His story is the real story; history and culture are but His scaffolding.

Since the Word is the bastion of truth in modernity's world of unreason, as we plant churches in south Brazil among urban communities of predominantly German descent enmeshed in Western culture, we must be prepared and equipped to think out the relationship of mission to culture and boldly and unashamedly proclaim the existence of the one true God who has made Himself known and has given us the privilege of knowing His purpose and directing our public and private lives according to His will. We must confront the humanistic and atheistic Western worldview that places itself and its dream at the center of the world, replacing it with the Christ of the cross, who alone gives purpose and meaning to all nations and cultures.

In summary, the launching of a multiplying church movement in south Brazil's urban population of predominantly German descent must be rooted in the Word of God and grounded in a solid cultural and historical framework.

CHAPTER 4

PLANTING THE CAMPO BOM CHURCH

Having laid the cultural and theological framework for launching a multiplying church movement among the urban centers of predominantly German descent in south Brazil, our initial step is to plant a church in the satellite city of Campo Bom, which is part of the Porto Alegre metropolitan area of over four million people.

Understanding the City of Campo Bom

The area which is now known as the city of Campo Bom was first inhabited by native Indians from the Coroado and Minuano tribes. Lang points out that the name Campo Bom or good field was first given it by cattle herders in the early 1800's, impressed with its excellent pasturelands and bountiful water supply. Located on the margins of the Sinos river, Campo Bom was the final stop for cattle being herded to the capital city of Porto Alegre from nearby mountainous regions; there they were fattened up before being sold.¹

¹ Guido Lang, *Campo Bom: História e Crônica*, (Campo Bom, Rio Grande do Sul: Papuesta, 1996), 20-21.

In 1824 the area was colonized by peasant farmers who emigrated mainly from the Hunsruck region of Germany with the promise of free land to cultivate. Their initial homes were built from rough hewn logs; later, they produced their own bricks and tiles which were used to build more permanent homesteads. Their principal activities included subsistence farming, as well as small family businesses and industries.

Since the great majority of the first colonists that settled Campo Bom were Lutheran Protestants, they chose Frederick Christian Klingelhoefter, a colonist himself and former pastor in Germany, as their first pastor in 1827. He assisted the Campo Bom community in erecting a church building in 1828, which became the first Protestant church building in southern Brazil. In 1851, it was substituted by the building that still stands today. Klingelhoefter served the immigrant community for about ten years, using the newly erected church building to officiate services on Sundays and teach school on the weekdays. Souza adds that in 1828 he also organized the community's first choir to sing on the festive occasions of the church's religious calendar, as well as participate in the special community events.² Sadly, he was killed in 1838 when fighting in the Farroupilha Revolution.

The Lutheran school in Campo Bom began in 1828, being the oldest Lutheran school and one of the oldest elementary schools in the state of

² José Edimar de Souza, *O Pastor Klingelhoefter e a Revolução Farroupilha*, (São Leopoldo, Rio Grande do Sul: Editora Oikos, 2009), 60-63.

Rio Grande do Sul.³ It functioned in the same building as the German Lutheran Church until 1889, when it moved to its own facilities, though still under the auspices of the church. With the growth of the school, new facilities were added in 1948 and 1978.

In 1846, Campo Bom was elevated to the status of borough. The city's demographics at the time boasted of nearly five hundred inhabitants, including thirty-nine farmers, thirteen tanners, ten shoemakers, five blacksmiths, four tailors, four coachmen, four carpenters, two woodcutters, one weaver, one miner, and one pastor and schoolmaster.⁴ In time, mills were established, followed by leather and shoe factories, for which Campo Bom is best known. By 1900, this small immigrant settlement began taking on the contours of a town. In 1911, the Fifteenth of November sports club was founded by the Vetter shoe factory and company, being the oldest amateur sports club in activity in the state of Rio Grande do Sul. By 1920 Campo Bom consisted of some two hundred homes, as well as businesses, with a population of approximately one thousand two hundred and fifty inhabitants. In the following years a bank, as well as postal and telephone service were added. Electricity came in 1925 and with it an increase in industrial

³ Raul Blos, *Campo Bom: 1825-1976*, 1977, (Campo Bom, Rio Grande do Sul: Prefeitura Municipal), 14.

⁴ Guido Lang, *Campo Bom: História e Crônica*, (Campo Bom, Rio Grande do Sul: Papuesta, 1996), 23-25.

production. In 1926 Campo Bom was elevated to the status of a district of Sao Leopoldo.

From its inception in 1824, Campo Bom depended almost exclusively upon the Sinos river for the transportation of its people and goods. Travel was slow and dangerous. With the arrival of the train in 1903, what took days by boat now took only hours by train. Goods produced in Campo Bom now had a direct link to the capital city of Porto Alegre and from there to the outside world. The building of roads and the subsequent rise of automobiles, trucks and buses beginning in 1928 slowly replaced the train and eventually led to its demise.

The development of Campo Bom came to a sudden halt in 1938, with World War II looming on the horizon. Lang notes that the Brazilian government, in keeping with its politics of nationalization, began a campaign to systematically erase “all the influences of the Germanic contribution to Brazilian lands.”⁵ Historical documents were confiscated, church archives removed, and Germanic inscriptions destroyed, causing irreparable and irreplaceable damage to the city’s cultural heritage. Homes were searched, personal possessions confiscated, buildings burned and many thrown into prison.⁶ Sadly, this was the price paid by the German immigrant community for simply preserving its historical

⁵ Guido Lang, *Campo Bom: História e Crônica*, (Campo Bom, Rio Grande do Sul: Papuesta, 1996), 76.

⁶ Guido Lang, *Histórias do Cotidiano Campobonense*, (Campo Bom, Rio Grande do Sul: Papuesta, 1998), capítulo 15.

roots and culture. The Brazilian authorities spared no effort to erase the Germanic influence and legacy from the collective memory of the community. It was a dark moment in the history of Campo Bom that will not soon be forgotten, especially by its German immigrant population.

With the war days behind, the Campo Bom community slowly regrouped and with doubled resolve began its march toward emancipation from Sao Leopoldo. In 1959 it finally achieved its long awaited desire, becoming a county seat and city in its own right. With a population of eight thousand five hundred inhabitants, it was one of the state's smallest municipalities in both territory and inhabitants. Despite its size, Campo Bom became a model and reference not only for the state of Rio Grande do Sul but also for the entire country of Brazil. Lang observes that during the 1960's it was the county with the highest literacy rate in the state, as well as the highest per capita income in the country. It promoted the country's first shoe fair in 1961, being a pioneer in the exportation of shoes to the North American and European markets. It also had the distinction of being the first city in South America to develop bicycle paths for its working class.⁷

Campo Bom today includes a population of over sixty thousand inhabitants with a diversified industrial and technological park housing nearly one hundred and twenty businesses. According to Souza, it is also

⁷ Guido Lang, *Campo Bom: História e Crônica*, (Campo Bom, Rio Grande do Sul: Papuesta, 1996), 117.

one of the state's major producers of fruits, vegetables and flowers. It has an impressive educational complex open to the public, including a library, cultural center, theatres, gymnasium and pools. It is a progressive city with numerous restaurants, theatres, clubs, museums and parks providing multiple options for the leisure of its inhabitants. Sports also play a prominent role in the city's life, especially soccer, but also track and field; the city has even had the distinction of hosting Pan-American games.⁸

Campo Bom has a niche all its own in the greater Porto Alegre metropolitan area. It is affectionately known as the "Small Giant of the Sinos River Valley," being large enough to offer a high standard of living, yet small enough to provide a friendly and neighborly atmosphere.

As we consider the city and people of Campo Bom, it is important to grasp its demographic contours, comparing key demographic profiles of its inhabitants with those of the remainder of the Porto Alegre metropolitan area in south Brazil, as well as those of the city of Fortaleza in northeast Brazil, where we initially planted churches, and those of the entire country of Brazil. Coupled with the demographic research, a number of traditional families were also interviewed concerning their culture, way of life, family values, work ethic and religious traditions, among other things. These interviews, along with personal observations

⁸ José Edimar de Souza, *Campo Bom Um Lugar Para Ser Feliz*, (Santa Maria, Rio Grande do Sul: Gráfica e Editora Pallotti, 2009), 25.

gleaned from living in the Sinos valley for over two years, have assisted in developing a portrait of the key characteristics of the city's inhabitants.

The people of Campo Bom are predominantly of Germanic descent. The ethnographic statistics of the 2000 census for Campo Bom are revealing:⁹

TABLE 1

CAMPO BOM RESIDENT POPULATION BY COLOR OR RACE		
White population of European descent	49,834	92%
Brown population of mixed descent	3,107	06%
Black population of African descent	870	02%
Native population of Indian descent	62	00%
Yellow population of Asian descent	10	00%

Source: Official government data: *Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatísticas* 2000.

From its inception in 1824 to this very day, Campo Bom maintains its distinct German ethnicity. For generations the traditional Campo Bom families have intermarried; only in recent years has there been an intermingling with other ethnic groups or races. Ronaldo Pinto, an accountant for a local shoe company, mentioned that he went against family tradition to marry his wife, Fernanda, of Italian descent, something that was unheard of in Campo Bom even thirty years ago.¹⁰ Silvano, of Italian descent, was the only one interviewed who married a

⁹ Official government data: *Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatísticas* <http://www.ibge.gov.br> (2000).

¹⁰ Interview with accountant Ronaldo Pinto in July of 2009.

Brazilian of brown skin and mixed racial descent.¹¹ Edio, of mixed Portuguese and African descent, married Candida, also of mixed Portuguese and African descent.¹² Those interviewed confirmed that the great majority of Campo Bom families continue to marry within their race and ethnic group. There remains a strong ethnic pull in Campo Bom to traditional cultural and family values.

When comparing Campo Bom's ethnographic profile with that of the entire Porto Alegre metropolitan area, there is a general similarity with some important differences:¹³

TABLE 2

PORTO ALEGRE RESIDENT POPULATION BY COLOR OR RACE		
White population of European descent	3,133,219	86%
Brown population of mixed descent	239,357	07%
Black population of African descent	253,764	07%
Native population of Indian descent	13,794	00%
Yellow population of Asian descent	4,795	00%

Source: Official government data: *Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatísticas* 2000.

When comparing Porto Alegre and Campo Bom's white population, the white population in Porto Alegre is six percent less than that of Campo Bom. On the other hand, Porto Alegre's black population is five

¹¹ Interview with small business owner Silvio da LaCosta in October of 2009.

¹² Interview with factory worker Edio Ibarra in July of 2009.

¹³ Official government data: *Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatísticas* <http://www.ibge.gov.br> (2000).

percent greater than that of Campo Bom. These statistics show that Campo Bom has retained more of its German ethnicity, while the Greater Porto Alegre area has absorbed more of those from other races.

When Campo Bom's ethnographic profile is compared with that of Fortaleza and the remainder of Brazil, the differences are unmistakable:¹⁴

TABLE 3

FORTALEZA RESIDENT POPULATION BY COLOR OR RACE		
White population of European descent	1,171,623	39%
Brown population of mixed descent	1,693,689	57%
Black population of African descent	91,193	03%
Native population of Indian descent	5,608	00.5%
Yellow population of Asian descent	5,295	00.5%

Source: Official government data: *Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatísticas* 2000.

TABLE 4

BRAZILIAN RESIDENT POPULATION BY COLOR OR RACE		
White population of European descent	91,298,042	54%
Brown population of mixed descent	65,318,092	38%
Black population of African descent	10,554,336	06%
Native population of Indian descent	734,127	01%
Yellow population of Asian descent	761,583	01%

Source: Official government data: *Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatísticas* 2000.

¹⁴ Official government data: *Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatísticas* <http://www.ibge.gov.br> (2000).

Campo Bom's white population is ninety-two percent; Porto Alegre's is eighty-six percent. Fortaleza's white population drops to thirty-nine percent, while the average white population for the entire country of Brazil is fifty-four percent. On the contrary, when comparing the statistics of the brown population of mixed descent, Campo Bom's brown population is six percent, while Porto Alegre's is seven percent. Fortaleza has a brown population of fifty-seven percent, while the average brown population for the entire country of Brazil is thirty-eight percent. Fortaleza is clearly much more representative of the country of Brazil as a melting pot for diverse races, while Campo Bom is much more of an ethnic enclave for those of German descent.

When considering the religious preferences of the people of Campo Bom, the 2000 census statistics give us the following religious profile:¹⁵

TABLE 5

CAMPO BOM RESIDENT POPULATION BY RELIGION		
Catholic	41,142	76%
Lutheran	6,629	12%
Pentecostal	3,173	06%
Baptist	541	01%
Spiritist	164	00%
Non-religious	971	02%
Other	1,398	03%

Source: Official government data: *Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatísticas* 2000.

¹⁵ Official government data: *Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatísticas* <http://www.ibge.gov.br> (2000).

These statistics show that the overwhelming majority of the people of Campo Bom are of Catholic persuasion, with a significant minority of Lutheran persuasion. The Pentecostal movement is slowly gaining a foothold in the city, while the mainline Protestant groups, such as the Baptists, are almost non-existent. Interestingly enough, a very small group of people is willing to call themselves Spiritists, though in my observation many more actually attend Spiritist sessions, while a larger group considers themselves non-religious.

The religious statistics of the Porto Alegre metropolitan area are similar to those of Campo Bom, with some important differences:¹⁶

TABLE 6

PORTO ALEGRE RESIDENT POPULATION BY RELIGION		
Catholic	2,723,153	74%
Lutheran	120,404	03%
Pentecostal	279,136	08%
Baptist	21,284	01%
Spiritist	177,590	05%
Non-religious	214,400	06%
Other	122,409	03%

Source: Official government data: *Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatísticas* 2000.

When comparing the religious statistics for Campo Bom with the entire Porto Alegre metropolitan area, it is noteworthy that while the

¹⁶ Official government data: *Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatísticas* <http://www.ibge.gov.br> (2000).

statistics for Catholicism in both cities are nearly the same at seventy-six percent and seventy-four percent respectively, the statistics for Lutheranism fall dramatically from twelve percent in Campo Bom to three percent in the Porto Alegre metro area. The Lutheran movement is quickly losing its foothold in the Porto Alegre metropolitan area, being replaced in large part by the Pentecostals, Spiritists and non-religious, who have grown in the vacuum left by its decline. The same pattern seems to already have begun in the religious composition of Campo Bom as well. James Mattes, a businessman from a traditional Lutheran family, is one of a number of those interviewed who pointed out that during the past decade the Lutheran movement has consistently been losing adherents to the Pentecostals and Spiritists.¹⁷ I have also noticed that a large number of those who attend our Bible studies in Campo Bom are from nominal Lutheran families who seem to be in search of replacing their cultural Christianity with life-giving faith in Christ.

When the religious statistics for Campo Bom and Porto Alegre are compared with those of Fortaleza and the country of Brazil, the differences are even greater:¹⁸

¹⁷ Interview with businessman James Mattes in September of 2009.

¹⁸ Official government data: *Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatísticas* <http://www.ibge.gov.br> (2000).

TABLE 7

FORTALEZA RESIDENT POPULATION BY RELIGION		
Catholic	2,353,658	79%
Lutheran	489	00%
Pentecostal	285,163	10%
Baptist	43,674	01%
Spiritist	43,463	01%
Non-religious	179,785	06%
Other	121,920	03%

Source: Official government data: *Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatísticas* 2000.

TABLE 8

BRAZILIAN RESIDENT POPULATION BY RELIGION		
Catholic	124,980,132	74%
Lutheran	1,062,145	01%
Pentecostal	17,975,249	11%
Baptist	3,162,691	02%
Spiritist	2,685,721	02%
Non-religious	12,850,051	08%
Other	3,456,867	02%

Source: Official government data: *Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatísticas* 2000.

The religious statistics for Catholics throughout Brazil is seventy-four percent, with Campo Bom having seventy-six percent, Porto Alegre seventy-four percent, and Fortaleza seventy-nine percent. The religious statistics for Lutherans drop drastically from twelve percent in Campo Bom to three percent in Porto Alegre to zero percent in Fortaleza, with a

nationwide average of one percent. In comparing Campo Bom and Porto Alegre's religious profiles with those of Fortaleza and Brazil as a whole, it becomes apparent that the two strongest religious movements in the nation are Catholicism and Pentecostalism. In south Brazil, Lutheranism remains a significant though lessening religious movement, while Spiritism demonstrates solid growth.

Understanding the social demographics of the city of Campo Bom also aids in our understanding of its people. The inhabitants of Campo Bom, for the most part, have deep roots in their city, either having been born there or having spent the majority of their lives there. The city is filled with small businesses and industries, offering a good quality of life to its inhabitants. In observing the homes in Campo Bom, it becomes apparent that a large majority of its inhabitants live on modest, yet comfortable means. The average monthly income in 2009 for south Brazilian families, those from Campo Bom included, was three thousand and thirty-one reais or nearly two thousand dollars.¹⁹ In comparing the standard of living in south Brazil with that of northeast Brazil, the statistics are revealing:²⁰

¹⁹ Official government data: *Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatísticas* <http://www.ibge.gov.br> (2009).

²⁰ Official government data: *Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatísticas* <http://www.ibge.gov.br> (2008).

TABLE 9

AVERAGE MONTHLY FAMILY INCOME BY BRAZILIAN REGION		
<u>Monthly Income</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>Northeast</u>
Below R\$1245	28%	61%
Between R\$1245-4150	53%	31%
Above R\$4150	19%	08%

Source: Official government data: *Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatísticas* 2009.

Whereas fifty-three percent of those from south Brazil fall into the median income category, sixty-one percent of those from northeast Brazil fall into the low income category. These statistics reflect the great difference in the distribution of wealth between the inhabitants of northeast and south Brazil. Whereas in south Brazil the wealth is more evenly distributed, with a majority of the population living on modest, yet adequate means, in northeast Brazil the wealthy elite live in luxury while the majority of the inhabitants struggle to make ends meet. Having recently moved from northeast Brazil to south Brazil, there is a noticeable difference in the way of life and standard of living of the people in Campo Bom when compared to those from Fortaleza. In interviewing Eric Lazarretti, a local entrepreneur, concerning his perception of an adequate income for living in the greater Porto Alegre area, he affirmed that a monthly salary of four thousand to five thousand reais would allow a family of five to live comfortably there.²¹

²¹ Interview with entrepreneur Eric Lazarretti in May of 2010.

The ethnic, religious and social demographic research coupled with interviews and personal observation presents a profile of the inhabitants of Campo Bom. They are a people known for their strong work ethic coupled with an entrepreneurial spirit. They are a productive people who take pride in their city and heritage. They are hard-working and individualistic, often preferring to work on their own. They are a thrifty people who take pride in what they do, evidenced in the care of their homes and businesses. They have a creative, practical mindset that is intuitive and pragmatic, valuing production, punctuality and dedication to their career. They are organized and methodical, being tenacious and perseverant in the fulfillment of their obligations and responsibilities. Author and lawyer Raul Blos commented on their persistent, hard-headed nature, jokingly stating that the only people more stubborn than the German people are those who stubbornly argue with them.²²

Another key characteristic of the people of Campo Bom is their traditionalism. They tend to be conservative in their outlook, preserving the cultural practices they believe to be important. They enjoy foods such as “churrasco,” “cuca” and “sagu,” beverages such as “chimarrao” and “bier,” as well as sports such as “bocha,” “bolao” and “tiro ao alvo,” to name a few. They are slow to change, preferring to do things the way they were taught and have always been done. Rogeria Rothe, a municipal clerk, mentioned the negative effects of this conservatism, remembering

²² Interview with lawyer and author Raul Blos in September of 2011.

the stigma she suffered for years in the community as a divorced person.²³

The Campo Bom people are also a patriotic people, taking pride in their history and cultural traditions. Farroupilha week in September is an important historical celebration. Cultural celebrations include Germanic games, festivities, dances and music. The people actively participate in these city-wide events, in this way seeking to preserve their cultural heritage.

Another key quality of the Campo Bom people are their tightly knit families. Heads of households are greatly respected, passing family values and customs down through the generations. Family businesses are also passed down from parents to children. Families enjoy being together and maintain close ties. They are initially reserved in their attitude toward strangers until friendships are solidly established. Family unity and hierarchy are preserved at all costs.

The Campo Bom people also value their religious traditions. Many of those interviewed mentioned their Christmas traditions, when families get together around a Christmas meal to enjoy typical German foods and pastries. Their Christianity seems to be connected to a large degree with their cultural heritage and to ties with their church of origin. The education of their children is also closely linked to their religious tradition, whether Lutheran Protestant or Roman Catholic. Though

²³ Interview with municipal clerk Rogeria Rothe in September of 2008.

preserving their own religious traditions, they generally display an ecumenical spirit in their relationships with those of other religions.

Most of those interviewed expressed the concern that the people of Campo Bom are slowly losing their Germanic identity. Erica Kepler, an artist and homemaker, lamented the fact that she did not pass her German dialect on to her children.²⁴ Others expressed their concern that traditions such as Germanic games, festivities and culinary were in many cases not being passed down by their children to their grandchildren. Nevertheless, despite the fact that the city's people of Germanic descent are gradually blending into the general Brazilian population, all agree that their legacy will remain, woven into the fabric of their homes, their cooperatives, their festivals, their clean and tidy neighborhoods, and their very lives. As Rigotto so cogently states, their strong work ethic has impacted the state's social and economic life, as farm settlements have developed into cities, backyard businesses into industries, one room school houses into universities, and churches into cathedrals.²⁵ They have made and will continue to make their unique contribution to the state of Rio Grande do Sul.

²⁴ Interview with Erica Kepler, an artist and homemaker, in November of 2010.

²⁵ Rockenback e Flores, *Imigração Alemã: 180 Anos História e Cultura*, (Porto Alegre, Rio Grande do Sul: CORAG, 2004), 6.

Planting the Church in Campo Bom

As we consider the steps taken to plant the Campo Bom church in light of the demographic and ethnographic composition of the city and its people, we must also understand who we are, where we are headed, and how we will get there.

We were first challenged to consider planting a church in Campo Bom in 2004 by a local pastor from the neighboring city of Novo Hamburgo. We had been ministering since 1980 in northeast Brazil, nearly three thousand miles northeast of Campo Bom. After committing the matter to prayer for about a year, we began sensing God's direction to move and help launch a multiplying church movement from Campo Bom. In August of 2007, weekly Bible studies were begun in Campo Bom by the Maranatha Baptist Church in Novo Hamburgo. With the arrival of our first missionary team member, Fabio Volpi, in April of 2008, the ministry in Campo Bom was transitioned to his leadership. He was joined by Roberto Silva in January of 2009 and by Rachel and I, as well as Jon and Denielle Johnson, in July of 2009. Our initial ministry team was completed with the arrival of Ellie Driesenga in November of 2009.

Our team joined a nucleus of believers desiring to see a church planted in Campo Bom. This nucleus came from diverse church backgrounds. Four families came from a cell church movement which emphasized ecclesiastical freedom over form. Four families came from

Baptist backgrounds which emphasized form over freedom. The remaining two families came out of Roman Catholic and Pentecostal backgrounds. All had one goal in common: that of seeing a church planted in Campo Bom. Our initial challenge was to take these believers from such a diversity of church backgrounds and mold them into a unified group, celebrating diversity while forging unity.

With a nucleus of believers committed to seeing a church established in Campo Bom and our missionary team committed to assisting them, we were now ready to interact with the people of the city in their cultural context and begin developing a church planting strategy for reaching them with the power of the gospel of Christ. Knowing the Campo Bom community to be by nature withdrawn and reserved toward outsiders, initial evangelistic contacts were made on a number of fronts. Visits were made to families who were open to the gospel; team members participated in local sports events. A special educational project was established in a local school, with the goal of offering English, sports and music training to students. A children's Bible class was begun. Teams from the United States held cultural interchanges in a local school setting. Christmas cantatas were performed in community centers. In time, a small nucleus of twenty-five to thirty believers was formed.

Knowing the Campo Bom community of predominantly German descent to be by nature cautious when exposed to new ideas, time was spent preparing the nucleus of believers for ministry. Foundational

truths concerning evangelism, discipleship, leadership training, church planting and missions were taught. Initial Bible studies with input from those attending focused upon a Biblical understanding of the church in its cultural context. The nature of the church was explored, as well as its leadership, ordinances and ministries. A congregational form of church government was developed, allowing them greater input in the decision-making process. Believers were challenged to discover their place in the ministry of the church that was being formed. Meetings were held to discuss and together form plans for the founding of the church. The believers had by this time indicated their desire to have Roberto Silva be the pastor of the church. He was further equipped and gradually transitioned into pastoral leadership as the church was established.

Our next step was to organize the church. Once again, care was taken to move as a group in decision-making. Knowing that a high value was placed upon proper training by the Campo Bom community, training for ministry was prioritized emphasizing Christ's command to multiply disciples, leaders and churches. Men were trained on a weekly basis as church leaders in the areas of personal, marital, Biblical-theological and ministerial discipleship. The multiplying model for planting churches was taught and adopted, with further evangelistic training given. Pre-evangelism strategies were developed to assist in making initial contacts with those in the community.

Knowing that the Campo Bom community valued orderliness and tradition, centrally located facilities were rented and Sunday services begun. Weekly prayer meetings were held and weekly youth meetings begun. Meetings for couples, men, women and children were also begun. An evangelism ministry was formed to promote community contacts and encounters through friendship evangelism, sports evangelism, music classes, English classes, home Bible studies, youth meetings, children's meetings, and the like within the Campo Bom community. The music ministry provided input and organization for the worship services. The fellowship ministry facilitated interaction between church members on a regular basis. The education ministry provided classes for each age group, from pre-school to adult. Men's, women's, couples, youth, adolescent and children's ministries were formed with the goal of discipling those who placed their faith in Christ, as well as assisting them in reaching their friends for Christ.

In May of 2010, the Campo Bom church was officially founded. Church leaders were selected; Roberto was ordained as pastor. Knowing the importance of social events to the Campo Bom community, a special founding celebration was held at the local "Applause Space" facilities, complete with decorations, cake and refreshments. All told, nearly one hundred and fifty guests attended.

As pastor of the Campo Bom church, Roberto has sought to maintain a four-pronged ministry thrust: the exalting of God, the teaching of the

Word, the fellowship of believers, and the reaching of the lost. His goal is that the Campo Bom church be the hub of a multiplying church movement that will spread into the surrounding satellite cities of the Porto Alegre metropolitan area and spark a multiplying church movement in other regions of Brazil and the world. Through his influence our missionary team has now expanded ministry into three neighboring cities: Estancia Velha, Sao Leopoldo and Novo Hamburgo. Our goal as a missionary team is to see the development of a missionary vision from the Campo Bom church that will not only impact south Brazil, but will also extend its influence into the European motherland as well, the heart of this vision being expressed in the missiological trilogy given by Christ in Matthew 28:19-20: multiply disciples, multiply leaders and multiply churches. To this end, a local church based training program has been started to assist in the training of believers and future church leaders, and a satellite seminary program is being pursued to assist in the training of pastors and missionaries.

Summary

In summary, the project design has provided an analysis and portrait of the city and its people, assisting in the development of an effective church planting strategy for Campo Bom. The demographic and ethnographic research coupled with the survey research and statistical

analysis conducted by means of questionnaires and interviews has facilitated positive interaction with the cultural milieu, beliefs and lifestyle of the people of Campo Bom. Personal observations have added further insight into the makeup of the city and its people. Much has already been accomplished in building friendships within the community, in sharing the gospel with those whom God is drawing to Himself, and in planting the beginnings of a solid Bible believing church in Campo Bom. The foundation for a multiplying church movement has been laid. The work has just begun.

CHAPTER 5

TOWARD A MULTIPLYING CHURCH MOVEMENT

Our goal in moving to south Brazil and in planting the church in Campo Bom has been to launch a multiplying church movement from the Porto Alegre metroplex into other predominantly urban communities of German descent in south Brazil, with a view to impacting Europe and beyond for Christ.

Assessing the Campo Bom Church

In evaluating the church planted in Campo Bom, a number of strengths and weaknesses have become apparent. Among the strengths is a commitment to the multiplying model of planting churches, following Christ's command in Matthew 28:18-20 to multiply disciples, multiply leaders and multiply churches. Emphasis was given to discipleship training with a four-pronged personal, family, Biblical-theological and ministerial focus. Roberto was trained and transitioned into leadership from the inception of the work in Campo Bom. The believers were challenged from the beginning to multiply disciples, leaders and churches with the goal of seeing a multiplying church movement begun from the Campo Bom church.

Prayer has also been a vital strength of the Campo Bom church, surrounding all that has been accomplished since its inception. Prayer is the life-line through which God works. Prayer on behalf of Campo Bom began on our part in 2004. Upon our arrival in 2009, we were amazed to discover that others had been praying for years for the establishing of a local church in Campo Bom. Prayer brings the believer into God's perspective and plan, opening his heart and making him moldable before the Lord. Through prayer God shows His will and reveals His concerns, down to even the details of life and ministry. Prayer brings the necessary peace to step out by faith into unknown territory, knowing that He is in control. The early Christian believers in Acts 2:42 devoted themselves to prayer; the apostles did the same in Acts 6:4. Jesus Himself in Mark 11:17 spoke of His house as a house of prayer. Prayer remains a ministry priority to this day, with the missionary team still meeting on a weekly basis to share and pray for the ministry there as well as in the surrounding areas

Another strength of the Campo Bom church plant has been the care placed in forming the missionary team to work there. The team ministry concept was a non-negotiable from the beginning, providing team member fellowship, encouragement and accountability, while at the same time multiplying effectiveness in ministry. Once again, prayer was foundational in forming the team. The need was made known and many contacts were made. Numerous possibilities were assessed and

reassessed. This was followed by a period of waiting upon the Lord to bring together those whom He wanted as part of the team. Once the team was formed, team members began ministering together before moving to south Brazil. This provided time for adjusting team member dynamics and fine tuning team member effectiveness. This also provided members with the opportunity to deepen friendships and become unified as a group. Once the team moved to south Brazil and began ministry there, a solid base had already been formed. Team members have built upon this base through open communication and a deepening of mutual trust as together they pursue their God-given vision of launching a multiplying church movement in south Brazil.

Another strength of the Campo Bom church plant has been the smooth transition from the missionary team to national leadership. The team's ministry model emphasizes building up church leaders both personally and in the eyes of their congregation. From the start, Roberto was placed in leadership together with the missionary team in Campo Bom. In this way, the believers grew under his leadership, thus avoiding the pitfall of becoming unduly attached to the missionary team. To this day there remains a good working relationship between the missionary team and Roberto as pastor of the church. The team role now is more one of giving counsel and encouragement and being there for the body of believers when needed.

A further strength of the Campo Bom church plant has been its multiple leadership structure. Roberto is one of three pastoral leaders in the church. These church leaders meet regularly under his leadership to pray and give guidance to the church. Pertinent issues are discussed and decisions are made as a pastoral body. Open communication and mutual accountability are emphasized. Friendships are deepened and commitment is strengthened. The bonding that has resulted has been beneficial, both on a personal and ministerial level, providing cohesiveness and unity for vision casting as a group.

Yet another strength of the Campo Bom church has been its organizational balance. Since Roberto has a background in law, he has brought to the church a keen mind as well as exceptional organizational skills. The church functions smoothly in its leadership and ministry departments. Balance is key, with adjustments made accordingly. While some ministries have been restructured for more effectiveness, others have been de-structured to facilitate ministry flow. Ministry leaders fulfill their responsibilities, knowing they are accountable to their pastoral leadership. Monthly meetings handle any business that needs to be taken care of by the body of believers. The believers know that the work is getting accomplished in an orderly fashion.

Coupled with its organizational balance, another strength of the Campo Bom church has been its educational emphasis. The church prioritizes education in its ministry budget. Teaching is geared to each

age group in age appropriate settings. Special classes are offered for couples, singles, men, women, youth, and children. Numerous outreach events are also held for different age groups throughout the year. Effective age-graded Bible classes are offered, as well as personal discipleship for those coming to faith in Christ. Counseling is available for those in need. Solid Biblical teaching is a key characteristic of the church in Campo Bom.

Still another strength of the Campo Bom church has been its music ministry. The innate musical talent of the German immigrant community in south Brazil is reflected in the church's body of believers. Many sing as well as play musical instruments, especially the guitar. A choir was formed from the church's inception. The presentation of Christmas cantatas, a German tradition in the area, is a highlight of the year. The believers love to sing, making congregational singing both exuberant and uplifting.

Yet another strength of the Campo Bom church has been its commitment to evangelism, disciple-making and missions. Pastor Roberto's heart for evangelism is gradually impacting the lives of the believers. He regularly makes evangelistic visits and asks for prayer on behalf of those being visited. He has established social projects in the community to open doors for evangelistic outreach through English, sports, Bible stories, and music. As people come to Christ, they are disciplined both on an individual and small group basis. A church-based

discipleship school is being planned to further train believers for service. The missions mandate has been emphasized as a church priority from its inception. Since the church was founded by a missionary team and has in Roberto a pastor who previously served as a missionary, missions has been kept at the forefront of ministry. The team has made an effort to avoid the mistake made by so many church planting missionaries of not emphasizing the very ministry in which they are engaged. God is already moving in the hearts of believers to respond to the missionary call. The church's first missionary candidate will soon be leaving to get further missionary training in preparation for full-time missionary service. Since missions is born in the heart of God, the church that takes to heart Christ's missionary mandate will reap His harvest.

A number of weaknesses have also been noted by the Campo Bom pastoral leadership. The reserved nature of those of predominantly German descent in urban south Brazil has hindered the building of bridges on the part of the believers with their unsaved neighbors. The resulting evangelistic strategy developed for south Brazil has been quite different from that used in northeast Brazil. Whereas contacts could quickly and easily be made with children and young people in northeast Brazil, parents in south Brazil are much more cautious about permitting their children and young people to attend outreach events. Whereas unsaved adults in northeast Brazil would readily accept an evangelistic visit, those in south Brazil are much more reserved about opening their

homes. This has led the church leadership to encourage greater friendliness on the part of the believers toward those who visit the church. Though friendly to those within their circle of friendships, the believers tend to hesitate in striking up a conversation with those whom they do not know. They naturally shy away from evangelistic opportunities with strangers, preferring to evangelize through friendships that they have developed. Knowing their reserved nature, friendship evangelism has been encouraged as a lifestyle.

This lack of friendliness to strangers leads to another weakness, that of being relatively unknown in the community. The church has struggled with this from its inception. Because Campo Bom is a city of some sixty thousand inhabitants, it is essential that the believers take advantage of every opportunity to make Christ known through-out the community. Pastor Roberto is seeking to remedy this situation by introducing himself to local municipal authorities, offering social projects in needy neighborhoods, having the church participate in the city's cultural agenda, beginning Bible studies in strategic suburbs of the city, as well as beginning a radio program on a local radio station, being careful to involve believers from the church in each of these opportunities.

Yet another weakness observed in the Campo Bom church has been the need for greater commitment on the part of believers to serve in ministry. Ministry opportunities abound, but the busyness of urban life keeps many from effective involvement in ministry. Though good

intentions abound, only a committed core can be depended upon to do the work of the ministry. Visits are being made and personal discipleship offered with the goal of involving every believer in ministry.

Because of the unique makeup of the Campo Bom church, there is also a need for greater fellowship and unity within the body. The core group of founding members comes from different church backgrounds, with each group developing strong ties within its own sphere of friendships and viewing church issues from the perspective of its own church traditions. These differing church traditions often lead to polarized positions and create tensions within the church body. Measures have been taken to promote greater fellowship and unity as a body by means of one-on-one discipleship, inter-group fellowships, as well as all church socials and picnics. Over time those from different church traditions are getting to know each other better, becoming more involved in one another's lives, and developing lasting friendships. This increased fellowship, in turn, is bringing greater unity to the church body.

The Campo Bom church plant has also struggled with unmet expectations. On one end of the spectrum are the believers who expected the church to experience rapid growth, rather than develop in a slow, steady manner. On the other end of the spectrum are those who felt that the church should initially have an inward focus toward the body, rather than an outward focus toward the community. These and other

transitional tensions affected the progress of the ministry, providing an opportunity for believers to learn to discuss issues, deal with them and move on with realistic expectations. The believers are once again uniting their efforts with renewed zeal to pursue the common goal of seeing a growing, Bible believing church established in Campo Bom, no matter what the cost.

Preparing for a Multiplying Church Movement

Our God is a surprising God. Over 30 years ago we began our missionary journey planting churches and training leaders in northeast Brazil. We had the privilege of seeing a multiplying church movement launched from the city of Fortaleza. Today we find ourselves in a completely different cultural setting beginning the process all over again in south Brazil. The church in Campo Bom is gradually releasing our missionary team to multiply church plants in the neighboring cities of the Porto Alegre metropolitan area. We are currently planting a church in the city of Estancia Velha and will soon be expanding our church planting efforts to the city of Sao Leopoldo. In reflecting upon the church planted in Campo Bom, a number of truths have been learned that will assist in preparing to multiply churches among urban centers of predominantly German descent in south Brazil

Understanding the culture of the community in which the gospel of Christ will take root is of fundamental importance. Careful study must be made of their cultural moors and values, their traditions and religious beliefs, knowing that the gospel must be given in the cultural context of those being reached for Christ. A number of cultural factors observed in the church planted in Campo Bom have contributed to the formation of a cultural framework for further church planting among urban communities of predominantly German descent in south Brazil.

Family traditions are of great importance to those of German descent in south Brazil. Families maintain close ties and often are initially reserved toward outsiders, until they get to know them better. They usually get together as extended families on Sundays for their traditional “chimarrao” and “churrasco.” The patriarch of the family exerts a strong influence in family decisions and in the lives of his children. His word is highly respected. As churches are multiplied in the predominantly German immigrant cultures of urban south Brazil, strong family ties need to be preserved and used for the good of the gospel. When contacts are made with family members, time needs to be taken to get to know them and overcome their initial reservations. As team members are introduced to their extended family, family dynamics need to be observed and time invested in breaking down walls and barriers, and in getting to know the patriarch and other influential members of the family. Once family members understand who team members are and why they are

there, doors will naturally open to share the gospel. As Bible studies are begun with extended families, they will be taught that God instituted families and has laid out His principles for family life. These Bible studies will normally take place on week nights, leaving Sunday mornings and afternoons free for their traditional family gatherings.

The urban communities influenced by German culture in south Brazil also maintain a strong work ethic. The people are hard-working and individualistic, preferring to be self-employed. There are many family run businesses, with parents passing on to their children their business and work ethic. They are organized, methodical, and punctual in their work. They are quite practical and pragmatic, following set patterns of work and preferring to do things the way they were taught, rather than trying a new way. As churches are multiplied among these urban communities of predominantly German descent, it is important to value their work ethic and seek to be organized and punctual in church functions and activities. Liberty must be given them to do things the way they feel most comfortable and work within their methodical approach and mindset. When ministry needs to be accomplished, responsibilities need to be given according to their gifting and skills. All believers need to be encouraged to serve within their strengths and abilities.

Folk and civic traditions are also important within the predominantly German immigrant culture of urban south Brazil. Each city has its own calendar of festivals. Music and traditional folk dances play an important

part in these community events. They are proud of their traditions and history. Their civic and patriotic spirit is quite noticeable, with great emphasis being given to state and national independence days. As churches are multiplied among urban centers of predominantly German descent in south Brazil, it is important to celebrate their civic heritage and encourage their patriotic spirit. Knowing that music plays an important part in their cultural traditions, music should be celebrated in the local church with specialized vocal and instrumental classes offered to the community. Music needs to be a foundational ministry of the local church.

Religious traditions are also strong within the urban communities of predominantly German descent in south Brazil. Many immigrant families, especially the older generation, still maintain formal ties with their church of origin, whether Catholic or Lutheran, though it is much more a tradition than a vibrant faith in Christ. Tradition has led Christianity to become to a large degree nominal and cultural, rather than personal and vibrant. This has created a spiritual vacuum, with many beginning to question their religious heritage. As churches are multiplied among them, their questions and doubts need to be personally explored from a Biblical perspective. They need to be taken back to the Bible as the only source of truth, opening the pages of Scripture with them and introducing them to the gospel of Christ. Informal home Bible study settings are ideal for initially sharing the gospel with them. They

need time to consider the claims of following Christ, for they are not interested in simply changing religions. They have a deep void in their lives and a longing in their hearts that can only be filled by the one true God who alone is the way, the truth and the life.

Materialism is quickly engulfing the south Brazilian communities of German descent into its increasingly globalized culture. Many are buying into its consumerism, hedonism and secularism. Pleasure is replacing convictions; choice is replacing truth; relativism is destroying meaning. Progress is everywhere, but so are crime, injustice, abortion and poverty. Pluralism's belief in everything has led to a belief in nothing. As churches are multiplied within this cultural context, it is crucial to understand that only the power of the gospel of Christ can overcome the challenge of materialism. A lifestyle free from the contamination of materialism must be lived out before them, showing them that true joy and satisfaction are found in Christ alone, and that only what is done for Him will reap eternal dividends.

These factors are foundational in forming a cultural framework for planting churches in urban communities of predominantly German descent in south Brazil. It is our privilege to proclaim Christ in a culturally relevant manner, to plant churches that are rooted in Christ and related to culture. We interact with culture every day as we speak and serve the people to whom God has called us as a witness. As we share the gospel of Christ, we will be agents of cultural change, whether

we are aware of it or not. It is our privilege to live as pilgrims, studying the lives and beliefs of the people to whom we are ministering, learning to live with them in a culturally appropriate way, discovering and answering their significant questions in the light of Scripture. We need to develop culturally appropriate and Biblically sound expressions of the truth of the gospel of Christ as we endeavor to take the whole gospel to the whole community.

Not only have cultural lessons been learned in the planting of the church in Campo Bom, but also a number of theological truths have been foundational in seeking to launch a multiplying church movement in south Brazil. First of all, there must be an over-arching passion to fulfill Christ's command in Matthew 28:18-20 to multiply disciples, multiply leaders and multiply churches. This command must be fulfilled both simultaneously and continuously; that is, the church must at all times and at the same time be multiplying disciples, leaders and churches if a multiplying church movement is to be launched. This will be accomplished as church leaders are empowered, being guided as they lead. There needs to be flexibility in forming a hand-tailored church planting strategy, knowing that each church being planted is unique with its own key ingredients for effective development and growth. Above all, the knowledge of missiology must be coupled with a passion to know the God from whose heart missions bursts forth, leading not simply as "experts" but as leaders who follow hard after God.

There must be a concern for the whole person, both material and immaterial, as people are reached with the gospel of Christ. Time needs to be taken to build friendships that will reap a lifetime of dividends, helping new believers distinguish true Christianity from culture Christianity as they are grounded in the Word of God and taught to live in a Christ-like manner, sharing with their friends the good news of the gospel of Christ. Both evangelism and discipleship must be done within the context of the local church, where believers can grow in the Lord and serve Him, for churchless Christianity is Christianity devoid of its local context, and as such is not Biblical Christianity at all.

The training of leaders must also be done within their own cultural and local church context, avoiding Western American training paradigms; rather, they need to be pointed to Christ's example as an effective leader. They must be empowered and trained to think in their cultural settings and apply Biblical truth to their cultural milieu. They need to be encouraged to produce materials that are culturally appropriate and Biblically sound. They need to learn how to reproduce themselves in the lives of those whom they are training.

The planting of churches must be solidly indigenous from its inception, assisting church leaders with the task of integrating their ideas, way of life, leadership style, and organizational structure in a Scriptural manner. There must be a ministry flow from evangelism, discipleship, and leadership training to church planting. Those trained

need to be given the freedom to develop their methods and strategies, all with a local church focus. This demands flexibility in forming a unique strategy for each church being planted.

The priority of missions must be emphasized from the beginning, for churches are used of God to multiply churches, both locally and globally. Believers need to be encouraged to be world Christians with a global perspective, having a growing awareness of how God is moving throughout His world today. They must be challenged with the need to involve themselves in missions, seeing how the Lord desires to use them in their own homeland, in their motherland and throughout the world. Church leaders must celebrate missions, coupling their knowledge of missiology with knowing the God from whom missions bursts forth. They must encourage those whom God has called to missionary ministry by having the church pray for them, provide for them and send them. Missions born in the heart of God will overflow in the lives of His people.

These factors are foundational in forming a theological framework for planting churches among urban communities of predominantly German descent in south Brazil. We must be theologically sound and missiologically informed as we come to grips with the worldviews, beliefs and practices that dominate our world today. As our missiology informs our theology and our theology strengthens our missiology, our ecclesiology will be anchored in the Word of God, focused upon the Son of God, relevant for the people of God and poised to share the love of

God. As we build our efforts in evangelism, discipleship, leadership training, church planting and world missions upon this theological framework, an effective multiplying church movement will be established.

APPENDIX 1

Brazil Gospel Fellowship Mission's 2020 Vision Statement

Our purpose as a mission is to reach Brazil for Christ.

To accomplish this vision, we will concentrate on expanding our multiplying church movement in strategic fields throughout Brazil that will in turn form ministry teams to impact other regions worldwide.

We are committed to using multi-national ministry teams for indigenous church planting, leadership training & support ministries in all of our fields.

In each field we will train Brazilian leaders to plant churches and develop support ministries for the churches being planted with the goal of establishing indigenous works that will...

- Develop leaders from within the local church
- Generate finances from within the local church
- Plant new churches by means of the local church
- Train and send missionaries from the local church
- Equip leaders to produce sound Biblical materials for the local church

To accomplish this vision, we commit ourselves to the following by 2020:

- Begin to expand the work in Northeast Brazil from Maceio to include Recife, Aracaju and Salvador
- Further develop the work in South Brazil from Greater Porto Alegre to include Caxias do Sul, Criciuma and Florianopolis
- Launch work in Southeast Brazil, targeting Belo Horizonte, Vitoria, Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo
- Begin to target additional population centers in Northeast Brazil, including Teresina and Sao Luiz, as well as Belem in North Brazil

We desire to instill this vision in all of our church plants and support ministries. As they grow toward maturity with competent national leadership generating adequate finances to continue and expand the work in their region, we will utilize existing personnel, financial support and ministry resources to expand ministry into these and other regions yet to be targeted as they are further researched and identified as priority.

Our desire is to be directed by God alone for the glory of God alone.

Source: *Brazil Gospel Fellowship Mission 2020 Vision Statement*, 2010.

APPENDIX 2

Brazil Gospel Fellowship Mission's 2020 Vision Strategy

I. Evaluating Missionary Models

A. The traditional model of planting churches

*In this model the missionary plants a church, transitions it to a national pastor and moves on to plant a new church with the goal of personally planting the greatest number of churches possible.

B. The centralizing model of planting churches

*In this model the missionary plants a strong church and remains in that church training pastors and missionaries with the goal of building a strong central church with as many satellite churches as possible.

C. The multiplying model of planting churches

*In this model the missionary multiplies himself by investing his life in training national pastors to plant local churches and missionaries to plant churches in other regions with the goal of launching a multiplying church movement with as many multiplying leaders and churches as possible.

#The multiplying model places missionaries strategically in ministry, creates less dependence upon missionaries and avoids unnecessary missionary-national pastor transitions.

II. Forming a Missionary Strategy

*At the heart of a multiplying church movement is the training of leaders both personally and collectively in the following areas:

A. Personal discipleship

*This includes investing in the development of their devotional life, Christian character, Biblical priorities, personal goals, etc.

B. Marriage discipleship

*This includes investing in the development of their husband and wife relationships, intimacy as a couple, communication and child raising skills, family finances, spiritual life, etc.

C. Biblical-Theological discipleship

*This includes training in Bible survey and analysis, Bible study methods, theological reflection, hermeneutics, apologetics, church history, etc.

D. Ministerial discipleship

*This includes training in evangelism and missions, discipleship and counseling, preaching and teaching, Christian education, music, pastoral theology, church planting, administration and growth, etc.

#Christ's missionary strategy was to masterfully prepare his disciples in 3 years to impact their world as they made disciples and planted churches in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and throughout their world.

III. Developing a 2020 Missionary Vision

*The proposed vision statement is built upon the following framework:

- A. Our missionary challenge—to reach Brazil for Christ
- B. Our missionary model—to use multi-national missionary teams to launch a multiplying church movement
- C. Our missionary strategy—to train Brazilian leaders to plant churches that are self-governing, supporting, propagating, missionizing and theologizing
- D. Our missionary objectives—to expand into northeast, south, north and southeast Brazil as the Lord opens doors
- E. Our missionary resources—to invest BGFM personnel and finances, as well as seek AIBIC and sister mission partnerships

#God has permitted us to be in a privileged position as a mission to develop and implement a plan for impacting key regions of Brazil for Christ, building upon the base He has blessed us with in Ceara. Though the challenge before us is great, our God is greater.

IV. Redeploying personnel

*The 2020 vision statement projects a need for 15 teams of 4 Families/singles to open new fields of ministry. The total need over time would be for about 60 families/single missionaries.

A. The need for veteran missionaries

*Veteran missionaries are important to the 2020 vision because they bring experience to the team. Those the Lord leads to move into these new opportunities will need to phase out involvement in their present ministry, transition their work to national leaders and phase into their new ministries.

B. The need for new missionaries

*New missionaries are important to the 2020 vision because they bring fresh ideas and energy to the team. Those the Lord leads into these new opportunities will need to complete their education, visit the field, raise support, learn the language and gradually phase into their new ministries.

C. The need for partnerships with other missionaries

*Partnerships with our Brazilian church leaders and like-minded mission agencies are important to the 2020 vision because they bring a culturally relevant perspective to the team. Those the Lord leads into these new opportunities will need to phase out their involvement in their current ministries, raise their support and phase into their new ministries.

V. Conducting surveys

*The 2020 vision statement projects expansion into strategic regional centers in Brazil. Surveys will need to be conducted to determine needs and priorities.

A. Researching evangelicals in Brazil

*Initial research has shown there to be about 15 to 20 million evangelicals in Brazil, including:

1. The mainline evangelicals, including Baptists, Presbyterians, Lutherans, etc., which comprise about 14% of evangelicals.
2. The Pentecostal and neo-Pentecostal evangelicals, including Assemblies of God, Foursquare, Pentecostals, etc., which comprise about 85% of evangelicals.
3. The conservative fundamentalist evangelicals, including Regular Baptists, Bible Baptists, Independent Baptists, etc., which comprise about 01% of evangelicals.

B. Researching strategic regional centers in Brazil

*Further research is needed in 15 strategic regional centers in Brazil including:

1. Northeast Brazil, especially Maceio, Recife, Aracaju & Salvador
2. South Brazil, especially Porto Alegre, Caxias do Sul, Criciuma & Florianopolis
3. North Brazil, especially Teresina, Sao Luiz & Belem

4. Southeast Brazil, especially Belo Horizonte, Vitoria, Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo

VI. Beginning ministry

*The 2020 vision statement projects an initial focus by the missionary teams in the following areas:

A. Leadership training & church planting

*The preparation and development of church leaders using the missionary strategy previously suggested is foundational for the church planting process (5 to 7 year suggested timetable to train leaders & plant a church).

B. Support ministries

*Support ministries such as schools, camps, radio, community projects, etc., will facilitate and accelerate the leadership training and church planting process (10 to 20 year suggested timetable to develop support ministries).

C. Multiplying church movement

*The goal is to launch a church planting movement that will multiply on its own (30 year suggested timetable to launch a multiplying church movement).

VII. Investing resources

*The 2020 vision statement projects a prioritized investment of funds:

A. Transition of existing ministries

*As our missionaries seek to transition their current ministries to competent national leadership and move on to new ministries within the 2020 vision, funds will be made available for necessary transitions.

B. Partnership with national missionaries

*As our fellow Brazilian missionaries desire to partner with us in the 2020 vision, funds will be made available for necessary partnerships.

C. Assistance with church property purchase & construction

*As our missionary teams plant local churches, funds will be made available for property purchase & construction.

D. Assistance with developing support ministries

*As support ministries are begun, funds will be made available.

VIII. Streamlining structure

*The 2020 vision statement projects changes in our mission structure:

A. Regional fields

*As we expand with missionary teams into new regions of the country, there will be a need to organize into regional fields that will handle their own business affairs and be accountable to the EC & FC.

B. Empowered leadership

*As we expand into new regions, there will also be a need to enable our field leadership to work with our regional leadership in functioning more efficiently and effectively as a field.

#As we consider a 2020 vision for the BGFM, the task before us is both exciting and overwhelming. If we desire lasting fruit, it is essential that we be directed by God alone with a vision blessed by God alone for the glory of God alone.

Source: Seminar presented by the author at the annual meeting of the Brazil Gospel Fellowship Mission on January 13, 2009.

APPENDIX 3
South Brazil German Immigrant Statistics

<u>Time period</u>	<u>German Immigration</u>
1824-1855	7,011
1856-1883	30,000
1884-1903	29,476
1904-1913	33,859
1914-1923	29,339
1924-1933	61,723
1934-1949	34,304
1950-1969	22,302

Source: Lauro Bocchi, Giovanni Corso, Joaquim Filippin, Egidia Muraro, and Jurandir Zamberlam. *Desafios das Migrações*. Solidus, 2009.

APPENDIX 4
Campo Bom City Statistics
2010

Founded:	1825
District:	1927
County seat:	1959
Total area:	60km ²
Urban area:	23km ²
Rural area:	37km ²
Population:	60,081 inhabitants
Pop. Density:	978 inhabitants/km ²
Micro-region:	Porto Alegre metropolitan area
Climate:	Subtropical
Altitude:	29m above sea level
Industries:	Shoes, ceramic, metals, commerce
GNP:	R\$19,907 per capita
Religion:	Catholic and Lutheran

Source: Souza, José Edimar. *Campo Bom Um Lugar Para Ser Feliz*.
 Grafica e Editora Pallotti, 2009.

APPENDIX 5
Campo Bom Survey Questionnaire

1. What is the ethnic heritage of your family?
2. Have you and your family always lived in Campo Bom?
3. What do you most appreciate about Campo Bom?
4. What are the greatest needs in Campo Bom?
5. What do you believe to be the key characteristics of those of German descent in Campo Bom?
6. What part of German culture has been preserved in Campo Bom?
7. What are the strengths of the German Lutheran Church in Campo Bom?
8. Has the Church met the needs of the Campo Bom community? Why or why not?
9. What is the importance of family, school, religion and work to those of German descent in Campo Bom?
10. In your opinion, what impact have German immigrants had upon the communities of south Brazil?

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VITA

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